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Celebrity pg 26

Williams not set to pick up Ledger's awards

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Entertainment

McGinnis tracks Idol's demise pg 25

No. 16 retires

Linden 'enshrined in Canucks lore' tonight

He figures he'll enjoy the moment once it's actually happening, but tonight's jersey retirement is more for this community than it is for Trevor Linden himself. The concept is appropriate, since Linden always played for the city on the front of the sweater, not the name on the back.

Doors to GM Place open at 5 p.m., with the pre-game tribute beginning at 6 p.m. The hour-long ceremony will feature plenty of video, former teammates and Linden himself, and will be carried live on Sportsnet for those not lucky enough to have tickets. It's a night this city has been waiting for since he took his final skate back on April 5, but one that's been in the making for more than 20 years.

Brian Burke smiles every time he talks about drafting Linden back in June 1988. The then-Canucks assistant GM had scheduled an interview with the 18-year-old, among others, as Vancouver held the second overall pick. A day or two before the meeting, Burke's telephone rang — it was Linden calling to say he wouldn't be able to make it. When Burke asked why, Linden sheepishly explained that he was expected to be at his uncle's farm to help with the birthing of calves.

Burke claims that phone call solidified his decision to draft Linden. Any kid that would choose family over the fame and fortune that potentially awaited him had exactly the character the Canucks were looking for.

Less than six years later, the scrawny teenager had become a man, and was on the verge of bringing a Stanley Cup home to Vancouver. Though it was not to be, Linden delivered perhaps the most inspiring performance of his career. Amidst injuries that included cracked ribs and torn cartilage, the Canucks captain scored both goals in a heartbreaking Game 7 loss to the Rangers. Ask him about it today, and you'll see shades of the sheer exhaustion and disappointment that was captured on his black-eyed face as he knelt on the ice in defeat at Madison Square Garden. His greatest individual effort meant nothing to a man who bled team.

That picture is a shocking contrast to the unbridled enthusiasm that envelopes Linden when he is engaged with the families at Canuck Place, one of the numerous charitable organizations he continues to donate both time and money to. Linden has the ability to bring a room to life with his mere presence, a trait he didn't recognize until his brother Jamie informed him of it years ago. While many athletes give back, the difference with Linden is that he does so when the cameras aren't rolling.

It's hard to pinpoint when this city adopted Linden as its own, but the reverse happened about three years after he arrived for training camp without a contract. In 1991, he purchased a town home in Kits, and says he just felt that this was home. Tonight, Linden becomes tangibly enshrined in Canucks lore. Future generations will look at his point totals and wonder why a player with far less than 500 goals and 1,000 points is held in such high regard. When parents and grandparents offer tales of justification, they will speak less about the hockey player and more about the person. If there is a better way to be remembered, it hasn't been discovered.

GETTY IMAGES

- Trevor Linden's grandfather, Nick van der Linden, immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands in 1929.
- Trevor was born April 11, 1970, in Medicine Hat, Alta., to Lane and Edna Linden.
- In 1995, Linden married Cristina Giusti, who is the owner of a Vancouver boutique.
- Linden is also an avid and competitive cyclist, frequenting the Squamish and Whistler area to mountain bike.
- In the summer of 2007, he competed in the Trans Alp bike race, a 600-kilometre race across the European Alps. Linden and racing teammate John Ramsden finished 48th out of the 122 competing two-man teams over the eight-day competition.

WIKIPEDIA.ORG

ToulBox
Scott Rintoul
scott.rintoul@metronews.ca

Scott Rintoul is a college athlete, sports fan and broadcaster. He can be heard Monday-Friday on the TEAM 1040 from 6-9 a.m.

Whistler gondola tower snaps in half

STRANDED Fifty-three people were rescued from dangling gondolas after a tower sheared in half at Whistler Blackcomb yesterday afternoon.

According to the RCMP, 10 of the people suffered non-life-threatening injuries when an apparent structural failure on Tower 4 caused the cable to sag on the Excalibur gondola near Fitzsimmons Creek. One gondola struck a house and another came to rest on the roof of a bus shelter.

Firefighters used a ladder truck to help people escape.

Organizers of the Vancouver 2010 Games were monitoring the situation yesterday as it developed, but declined comment.

Whistler will host the sliding, alpine skiing and Nordic skiing events during the 2010 Olympics.

METRO VANCOUVER

ANDY CLARK/REUTERS

A gondola support tower leans over after it partially collapsed in Whistler yesterday.

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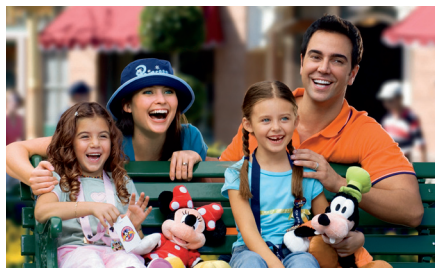

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Fund set up to aid Burnaby mom hit by house fire
A trust fund has been set up for a single mom in Burnaby who recently lost her home in a fire. Donations for Dawn Devries will be accepted at TD Bank starting today, for account 6318060, branch 9656. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Local

Train collects donations

TransLink has a special SkyTrain car stopping at seven stations around metro Vancouver today to collect donations for the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society and the Surrey Food Bank today. For more information, visit translink.bc.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Liquor tax hike recommended

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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British Columbians could be paying more for liquor if a recommendation to increase tax on alcohol, made yesterday by provincial health officer Perry Kendall, is implemented.

A five-cent tax on drinks with high levels of alcohol is just one of several recommendations Kendall made after releasing his 2008 Public Health Approach to Alcohol Policy report.

The study found that alcohol consumption in British Columbia has gone up eight per cent since 2003, and binge drinking among teens is also rising.

Kendall said the increase could be attributed in part to the fact that 500 new liquor stores have opened in B.C. since 2002.

"When we looked at (whether) the increase was resulting in harm, we did find that rates of potentially harmful drinking had gone up as well," Kendall told Metro.

"Currently, high-alcohol beers cost less per unit of alcohol than lower-alcohol beers," he said, adding that raising the price of those drinks would encourage people to buy lower-alcohol beverages.

Money raised from the tax increase, he said, could go toward research, prevention and treatment programs. Kendall said he's also recommending more road checks and fetal alcohol syndrome initiatives, as well as education programs for teens.

Consumption

- The average person over the age of 15 drinks more than 500 glasses of alcohol per year, according the Approach to Alcohol Policy report.

JEFF HODSON / METRO VANCOUVER

Lynda Pasacreta, president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau for mainland B.C., unveiled the top 10 scams in the province yesterday at police headquarters in Vancouver.

Beware scammers: BBB

JEFF HODSON
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Scammers are making the most of the economic downturn by taking advantage of people's emotions and pitching investments for quick profit and advance-fee loans, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) warned yesterday.

"Economic-downturn scams are a big issue this year," said Lynda Pasacreta, president and CEO of the BBB for mainland B.C. yesterday as she unveiled the top 10 scams in the region.

"A growing number of consumers have been contacted by companies offering everything from small-business cash advances to investment opportunities."

Pasacreta said the pitches are often made via mass e-mail. In 2008, 3,000 British Columbians contacted the BBB about the legitimacy of loan offers. About one-third involved advance-fee loan brokers.

Another recent scam is the investment club, which she called "thinly veiled pyramid schemes," offering quick profit.

The top 10 scams also included greenwashing — false marketing of products that claim to be environmentally friendly — and spoofing attacks, which occur when a person receives an e-mail from a bank or the Canada Revenue Agency and are tricked into passing along personal information.

News in brief

PREGNANCY Gay, lesbian and bisexual teenagers in British Columbia are at a higher risk of pregnancy because of discrimination, sexual abuse and harassment, according to a UBC study released yesterday. It found that those teenagers were twice as likely as their peers to have been discriminated against because of sexual orientation.

SUSPICIOUS Vancouver police are looking for a man who tried to kidnap a 15-year-old girl in southeast Vancouver, news1130.com reports. The man allegedly grabbed the girl from behind and tried to pull her into his van on Monday morning. She was able to break free and run away.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Read Caroline Kennedy's star power making rivals for Senate seat nervous at **metronews.ca/world**

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More snow on the way

At least another five centimetres of snow is expected to fall in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island today. Victoria, which is predicted to get as much as 15 centimetres, will likely be the hardest hit. METRO VANCOUVER

Two Surrey men held for stabbings

FIGHT New Westminster Police are holding two Surrey men in connection with the stabbing of two other men, cknw.com reports.

Police found the victims with non-life threatening life wounds on Monday. Police said all four men know each other and were yelling before the fight became violent. METRO NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

ANGEL BBQ Around 3,000 turkey burgers were served up to low-income and homeless people at Oppenheimer Park yesterday for the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society's first annual Community Angel BBQ In The Park. The bank said that 41 per cent of its clients are children.

JACKET DONATIONS Around 1,000 winter and fleece jackets are being handed out at Union Gospel Missions in Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster this week. The program is run by STORMTECH Performance Apparel, which is also donating to Vancouver General Hospital's Clothing Program.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Ice floes close Albion Ferry

JEFF HODSON
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The ferry link between Maple Ridge and Fort Langley will remain closed for the foreseeable future — until ice floes dissipate and temperatures rise above freezing, the operator of the Albion Ferry said yesterday.

Dave Miller, president of Fraser River Marine Transportation, the TransLink subsidiary that operates the Albion Ferry, said service halted yesterday when ice — travelling upriver with the rising tide — piled up at the ferry docks.

"The ice has got to the stage now where it is quite thick," Miller said. "We don't have ice-breaking hulls ... ice is just like a razor blade, it can cut metal like you wouldn't believe."

Miller said the ferry will remain closed until temperatures rise above 0 C, which is not in the near future.

Environment Canada's forecast for Pitt Meadows shows temperatures ranging from 0 to -11 C for the next three days.

"The ice is getting worse and worse," Miller said. "It flows down with the tide and then flows back up overtop of itself and becomes thicker and thicker and more and more dangerous."

Seven-year hitch

FILE PHOTO

The Albion Ferry between Fort Langley and Maple Ridge in April.

- It is the first time in seven years that the Albion Ferry has been closed to ice, TransLink spokesman Drew Snider said yesterday. The last time it was shut down for two days.

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Premier Gordon Campbell, left, listens to Mayor Gregor Robertson at the World Trade Centre in Vancouver yesterday.

200 new shelter beds announced

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Around 200 homeless people in Vancouver could be off the streets for the winter thanks to a new partnership between the province, city and the Streetohome Foundation to open 200 temporary shelter beds.

The $1.5-million initiative, which was announced yesterday, would provide temporary overnight shelter beds at three locations in the next three months.

"We're facing some very severe weather and we have to provide shelter to people," Premier Gordon Campbell said at the announcement. "We want to make (these beds) available as quickly as possible."

Housing solutions

- The city of Vancouver has bought and is renovating 17 single-room occupancy hotels.
- More than 1,400 affordable units are being developed on 14 city sites around Vancouver.
- Roughly 1,180 extra shelter beds are made available through the Emergency Shelter and Extreme Weather Response programs.

He added that through shelters, homeless people can be connected with other services, supports and permanent housing opportunities.

Mayor Gregor Robertson added that the 200 new beds are a first step toward ending homelessness, "not a solution."

"Since homelessness is a top priority of this council, we are taking immediate action to get people off the street," he said.

The three locations are distributed across the city at Stanley/New Fountain in Blood Alley, 240 Northern St. and 1442 Howe St.

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   (b) possess or use a security alarm system without holding an alarm permit for such system issued under this By-law.

Fines

40. Every person who commits an offence against this By-law is punishable on conviction by a fine of not less than $100.00 and not more than $2,000.00 for each offence.

Fines for continuing offence

41. Every person who commits an offence of a continuing nature against this By-law is liable to a fine not exceeding $50.00 for each day such offence is continued.

Program Overview: In an effort to reduce false alarms, the City of Vancouver implemented Security Alarm Bylaw No. 7111 on July 5th, 1993. Under the Bylaw **a Permit is mandatory for any premise with an alarm system, whether monitored or not, within the City of Vancouver.** It is an alarm user's responsibility to purchase/renew an alarm permit annually. There are three classifications of Alarm Permits currently priced as follows: Residential - $17.55, Small Commercial (with premises less than 140 square metres in size) - $29.25, and Large Commercial with premises greater than 140 square metres in size) - $58.50.

For more information please contact:
The False Alarm Reduction Program
#165 – 555 W. 12th Avenue (City Square Mall), Vancouver, BC V5Z 3X7
Phone: (604) 871-6150 Fax: (604) 871- 6152
For more information about Security Alarm System Bylaw No. 7111,
please check out the City of Vancouver website at: www.vancouver.bc.ca

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Ottawa library lends electronically
Capitalizing on the strong sales of portable e-book readers in the nation's capital, the Ottawa Public Library has started lending e-books over its website. CBC NEWS ONLINE

Canada

Grinch steals kids' gifts

A Calgary couple is wondering how to tell its kids Santa can't afford to come after a thief broke in and stole virtually all the gifts under the Christmas tree. A train, a toy drum, a Playstation 3 and about $1,000 for next month's rent and utility bills were among the missing items after a Monday night robbery.
METRO CANADA

Rebels offer conflicting reports on missing Canadian UN envoy

Confusion surrounded the fate of a missing Canadian UN special envoy in Niger yesterday after a dissident Tuareg rebel faction in the West African state first said it was holding him and then denied it.

The contradictory statements about UN envoy Robert Fowler were posted on the website of the Front of Forces for Rectification (FFR), a faction which split from the main Niger Tuareg-led rebel group MNJ (Niger Justice Movement) in May.

UN officials said Monday the vehicle in which Fowler, his Canadian aide Louis Guay and a local driver were travelling was found abandoned Sunday evening 45 km northeast of the capital Niamey.

The engine of the UN vehicle was still running, they said.

A first posting yesterday on the FFR website, signed by FFR's commissioner for war, Rhissa Ag Boula, said the group's fighters were holding four people, including Fowler.

"On December 15, 2008, fighters of the Front des Forces de Redressement (FFR) carried out a commando operation in the Tillabery region in which we detained four people including a Canadian diplomat, Mr. Robert Fowler," the posting said.

A subsequent posting hours later by FFR president Mohamed Ag Aoutchiki Kriska denied the group was holding Fowler, but acknowledged he could have been abducted. REUTERS

FFR statement

- "Even if identical movements active in the Tillabery region which adhere to the FFR's ideals may have taken the Canadian diplomat, the FFR cannot take responsibility for this act," FFR president Mohamed Ag Aoutchiki Kriska said in a statement released on his group's website.

CFB Trenton **Soldiers mourned**

FRED THORNHILL/REUTERS

Family members of Pte. Justin Jones embrace as the hearse carrying Jones' casket arrives at Canadian Forces Base Trenton yesterday. The casket of Jones arrived with those of Cpl. Thomas Hamilton and Pte. John Curwin. Since 2002, 103 Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan. Go to metronews.ca/canada for more information.

Layton not expecting 'miracle'

POLITICS The federal budget should reflect the Liberal-NDP coalition's demands but it'll be a miracle if that happens, says New Democrat Leader Jack Layton.

A major stimulus package including affordable housing and a child-care program, assistance for seniors and investment in infrastructure is needed, Layton said after addressing the United Steelworkers at their annual Christmas luncheon in Toronto yesterday.

"It's got to resemble what we are seeing in other countries," he said.

But Layton added he wasn't optimistic Prime Minister Stephen Harper could deliver a budget that'll win the confidence of the opposition parties, which threatened to bring down the government earlier this month.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Chrysler to be 'treated differently'

BAILOUT Rescue cash for Chrysler — a company controlled by a deep-pocketed private New York firm — will have strict terms to prevent the automaker from taking advantage of Canadian taxpayers, warns Ontario's economic development minister.

"Chrysler will have to be treated differently," Michael Bryant said yesterday.

He promised the Detroit Three automakers will get the life-saving financial "CPR" they need to prevent the eventual loss of over 500,000 jobs in Ontario predicted in a new study if General Motors, Ford and Chrysler were to go bust.

But there will be strings attached, particularly with Chrysler, which has major assembly operations in Brampton and Windsor, Ont.

Details are "yet to be determined" but could include special warrants placing restrictions on any profits taken by Chrysler at the expense of taxpayers, Bryant added.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Cerberus

- Chrysler's American parent is controlled by Cerberus Capital Management LP, a New York-based firm that manages $27 billion US in assets and has been under fire in Washington for not putting more of its own money into the faltering automaker.

News in brief

JACKPOT The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., which was slammed in a 2007 Ontario ombudsman's report for not cracking down on retailers over lottery fraud, has paid out $80,000 plus interest to a Burlington, Ont., woman allegedly victimized by a lottery retailer. Jamie Antinori, 49, bought her winning 6/49 ticket on Nov. 28, 2004, from a convenience store.

SEIZURE Newfoundland and Labrador will expropriate AbitibiBowater Inc.'s timber and hydroelectric assets when the company closes its mill there next year, Premier Danny Williams said yesterday. The firm had "the privilege" of using the province's natural resources and now the government is returning them to the people, he said.

PLEA A lawyer for the man charged with the death of a teenage girl on a walking trail in Edson, Atla., pled not guilty in court yesterday. Ross Edward Kleman is facing first-degree murder charges.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Lougheed Mall
Metrotown/Metropolis
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4711 Kingsway
7531 Market Crossing
111 - 3823 Henning Dr.
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11 - 45905 Yale Rd.
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New Westminster
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Delta
Scottsdale Mall
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1517 56th St.

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Walnut Grove Town Centre
Willowbrook Shopping Centre
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103 - 19700 Langley Bypass
C104 - 20159 88th Ave.
19971 96th Ave.
C7 - 20202 66th Ave.

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115 - 12571 Bridgeport Rd.

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Pine Centre (Prince George)
Piccadilly Mall (Salmon Arm)
Village Green Mall (Vernon)

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Squamish
38116 2nd Ave.

Polish consul general recalled after drunk driving allegations

The Polish consul general in Vancouver is being recalled amid allegations he had three times the legal limit of alcohol in his bloodstream when his car collided with a fire truck. Tomasz Lis was arrested following the crash Friday and is expected to return to Poland shortly. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Awash in economic gloom

A little over two months ago, Prime Minister Stephen Harper assured Canadians the economy was well placed to deal with the global recession and dismissed talk of budget deficits.

That relatively upbeat era is now over, washed away by an ever-widening river of gloom, stark language, pleas for help and relentlessly negative data.

"The truth is, I've never seen such uncertainty in terms of looking forward … I'm very worried about the Canadian economy," Harper told CTV television Monday. "Obviously, we're going to have to run a deficit."

His comments further eroded dwindling stocks of optimism in a country where you cannot escape predictions of doom.

Statistics Canada releases a steady stream of downbeat reports, and barely a week goes by without an industry group forecasting calamity unless governments step in to help.

Harper's language has changed from the moment in mid-September when he dismissed talk of a recession.

CHRIS WATTIE/REUTERS

Prime Minister Stephen Harper takes part in a caucus meeting on Parliament Hill in Ottawa last week.

In October, he said, "I remain fundamentally optimistic about the Canadian economy," yet since then has sounded steadily less optimistic.

John Clinkard, chief economist at Deutsche Bank in Canada, said Harper had been reacting to the best information he had available at the time.

"There has been a change and so the information he took back in September has changed significantly and the clouds are much more ominous," he said yesterday.

"To be fair, among G7 countries we are the least impacted to date," he added.

He did note, however, that his own forecasts for next year had become significantly more pessimistic in the last month.

There is certainly no shortage of downbeat predictions.

Montreal-based Laurentian Bank yesterday issued its 2009 outlook for the Canadian economy, saying it "will face challenges far more demanding than those in previous years."

Both Laurentian and Clinkard pointed to the recent sharp fall in the cost of a barrel of oil as a problem. Canada is a major exporter of energy.

Clinkard forecast the lower oil price would hit Canada's terms of trade. "The impact of the terms of trade on Canada's growth has been very positive up until now," he said.

"We're going to lose that, so that will I think have a very significant impact on domestic demand which … has kept this economy alive, basically."

REUTERS

Suit against anti-prostitution laws thrown out of B.C. court

VANCOUVER A judge rejected a lawsuit yesterday that claimed the country's prostitution laws were unconstitutional, ruling a group of former and current prostitutes did not have the legal standing to sue.

The group of sex trade workers in Vancouver had argued the laws, including making it illegal to operating a brothel, endangered them by forcing prostitutes to ply their trade on the streets.

The court accepted the government's claim the group and a former prostitute who was the lead plaintiff could not actually challenge the law because their private interests had not been violated.

The government argued laws are normally challenged by people who have been charged with a crime, but that was not the case. The suit's backers argued few prostitutes would be willing to be part of a legal challenge.

Justice William Ehrcke said the lawsuit did raise serious questions about the law, and just because he was tossing it out did not mean the prostitution legislation was "effectively immune from judicial scrutiny." REUTERS

News in brief

CHARGES An Edmonton police constable was relieved of his patrol duties and placed into an administrative position yesterday after being accused of physically assaulting a man he arrested. The constable, 29-year-old Haoyin Zheng, was charged with assault and assault with a weapon. Zheng is expected to make his first appearance in an Edmonton courtroom Feb. 17.

HALIFAX A teen who helped trap and torture a girl for four hours last June won't spend time behind bars, because he helped carry the victim home. A judge said yesterday the conflicting behaviour shows how he was pressured "to go against his nature." The judge handed him a three-month sentence, to be served at home, followed by a year's probation. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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OPEC rallies behind record oil-supply cut

OPEC oil ministers lined up yesterday to back what would be the group's biggest output cut as crude prices fell further. Saudi Arabia was first to publicly support a reduction of two million barrels per day ahead of OPEC's meeting today. That figure was swiftly endorsed by other group members. REUTERS

World

Madoff unlikely to oust Ponzi in lingo

Bernard Madoff may have to wait a while before his name becomes a term in the popular lexicon and bumps off "Ponzi," which has become shorthand for financial fraud. Madoff's name is already being used for puns, such as, "He Made-off with my money," following his arrest last week on fraud charges in what investigators said was a "Ponzi" scheme that cost his investors $50 billion US. REUTERS

France **Student protest**

CHARLES PLATIAU/REUTERS

French high school students shout slogans during a demonstration in Paris yesterday, the day after French Education Minister Xavier Darcos announced he would indefinitely delay a reform of the secondary school curriculum after protests by pupils turned violent last week. The placard reads Withdraw the Darcos Reform.

News in brief

DISEASE Eastern China's Jiangsu province has culled 377,000 poultry after laying hens tested positive for the H5N1 bird flu virus, the Ministry of Agriculture said yesterday, in the first reported case since the early summer.

PIRACY The UN Security Council yesterday authorized countries fighting piracy off the Somali coast to take action also on Somalia's territory and in its airspace, subject to approval by the country's government. REUTERS

Italy pursues 100 mobsters

Italian police said they launched a pre-dawn swoop yesterday to arrest 100 people suspected of trying to rebuild the top ranks of the Sicilian Mafia, which has been weakened by the recent arrests of powerful mob leaders.

The "Perseus" operation, conducted with more than 1,200 police officers, helicopters and anti-drug units, was in progress across Sicily and parts of Tuscany.

"If Cosa Nostra was on its knees after operation Gotha in June 2006, then with operation Perseus it has been prevented from getting up again."
Pietro Grasso

The mobsters are being pursued on charges of extortion, trafficking arms and drugs, and having mafia links.

They are suspected of trying to recreate the top-level Cosa Nostra body responsible for taking important decisions, with the support of Matteo Messina Denaro, one of the most powerful godfathers on the run.

"If Cosa Nostra was on its knees after operation Gotha in June 2006, then with operation Perseus it has been prevented from getting up again," said Italy's anti-mafia prosecutor Pietro Grasso.

Italian police have inflicted major blows on the Sicilian mafia with arrests of several high-profile mafiosi in recent years, such as the "boss of bosses," Bernardo Provenzano, in 2006 and his heir apparent, Salvatore Lo Piccolo, in 2007. REUTERS

Dozens of Russian tourists die in Israel bus crash

FATALITIES An Israeli bus full of newly arrived Russian tourists veered off a desert road and plunged down a ravine yesterday, killing at least 24 people and seriously injuring about a dozen more.

The crash, in the desert north of the Israeli Red Sea resort of Eilat, was one of the worst Israeli road accidents in years.

"I saw people flying out of the windows as the bus rolled down the slope."
Witness to the crash

Soldiers, police and rescue workers rushed to the scene and army helicopters helped evacuate dozens of injured survivors.

"I saw people flying out of the windows as the bus rolled down the slope," said one driver who witnessed the crash.

Bodies, baggage and bits of wreckage were scattered over the steep slope down from the highway, and the bus lay on its side on the rocky desert floor.

Israel's Airport Authority said the victims had just arrived from St. Petersburg at Ovda airport, which serves Eilat. A police source said they were Russian tourists. An official at the Russian Embassy in Tel Aviv said he had no confirmed information. REUTERS

Greek PM promises to fight corruption after protests

UNREST Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis pledged yesterday to tackle corruption after 11 days of violence triggered by the police killing of a teen and fuelled by public anger at scandals and the economy.

About 100 youths attacked a police station in Athens, while others briefly occupied the state TV station, interrupting the news. More violence flared in the northern city of Thessaloniki.

Karamanlis said helping Greeks — a fifth of whom live in poverty — was a priority, but his options were restricted by the country's debt, made worse by the riots that quickly spread across Greece. REUTERS

Pakistan eyes crackdown after Mumbai attacks: Kerry

EFFORTS The attacks in Mumbai, India last month have convinced Pakistani leaders of the need for a crackdown on the Pakistan-based group Lashkar-e-Taiba, U.S. Senator John Kerry said yesterday.

India has accused LeT of involvement in the November attacks that killed 179 people.

Pakistani security forces have detained more people than India was aware of in a sweep that began a little over a week ago, and the government was intent on convicting anyone linked to the attacks, Kerry said.

Kerry has visited Pakistan and India to try to reduce tensions between the two rivals. REUTERS

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USA: ONE-WAY Tango Plus fares from Vancouver. Travel must be completed by November 30, 2009.

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$279	$309	$329	$359	$405	$420	$444	$559

International: Fares are EACH WAY from Vancouver and require ROUND-TRIP purchase. Departure dates as indicated below.

SEOUL	LONDON HEATHROW	FRANKFURT[1] MUNICH[1]	PARIS	BEIJING	ZURICH	HONG KONG	SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
JAN. 1, 2009–APRIL 30, 2009	JAN. 1, 2009–APRIL 30, 2009	JAN. 1, 2009–MAY 14, 2009	JAN. 1, 2009–MAY 14, 2009	JAN. 1, 2009–APRIL 30, 2009	JAN. 1, 2009–APRIL 30, 2009	JAN. 1, 2009–MAY 24, 2009	FEB. 16, 2009–MARCH 31, 2009
$294	$303	$355	$372	$390	$405	$429	$639

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Comment & Views

Comment

Winter wonderland

Vancouverites wondering what happened to global warming

TheWestView

Paul Sullivan
Journalist & Media Consultant

I've had it with all the complaining from the Prairies about the alleged "deep freeze" they're enduring.

Cold it may be, but they're used to it. They even have those little plug thingies sticking out of the front end of their combines to keep them nice and warm. And I understand they have to wear long underwear between October and April or face a stiff fine.

Those people are prepared.

Here in Vancouver, however, it's only going up to zero today, (gasp!) and these Arctic conditions have taken us completely by surprise. It's a state of emergency. Our local competitor, the Vancouver Sun, is so swept up in the general panic, yesterday morning's front page featured a 200-point headline warning: "Get ready for 10 days below zero."

Below the fold there's an entirely serious piece from star columnist Pete McMartin sternly taking the Environment Canada guy to task for failing to predict a five-centimetre snowfall. It's a scandal!

But we ain't seen nothin' yet. According to the long-term forecast from Accuweather, cold records could be smashed over the next few days. The overnight temperature could plummet to –11 C. The chastened Environment Canada guy has been forced to admit there may even be more snow coming.

Whatever happened to global warming?

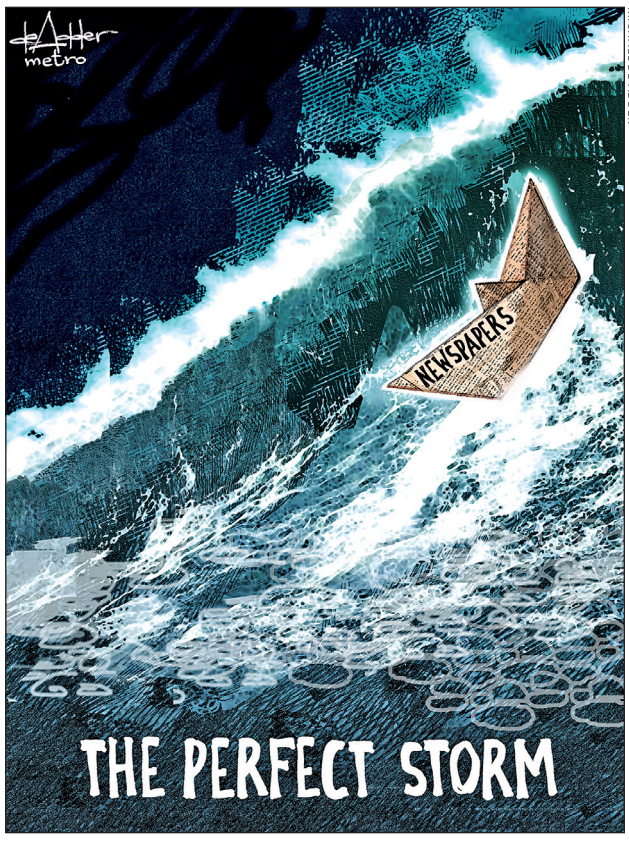
Laugh you may, but this is a city that practises annual winter denial. The beaches and sidewalk cafes are busy (thanks to those industrial-grade heaters), and every year we wait for a mild day and dash out with the lawn mower and the camera so we can send our hapless eastern relatives pictures of us mowing the lawn in December.

There will be no lawns mowed this December. There will be no lawns this December. We may even — wait for it — be forced to endure a white Christmas and all the hoo-hah that goes with it.

Of course, our dirty little secret is that it snows every winter in Vancouver; at least it has since I've lived here — nearly 20 years. It usually lasts for a couple days and then the rain comes and mercifully washes it all away. But every time it snows, you'd think it was the first time. We crash into each other with reckless abandon, close all the schools and lose power, forced to huddle in the dark by candlelight until it blows over.

One day, perhaps, we'll all go, "Oh!" and buy hats and mitts and shovels and get on with it. In the meantime, if this year's Christmas card includes a photo of Uncle Fred mowing his lawn in December, be suspicious. Be very suspicious.

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Word on the street: Would Michael Ignatieff make a better prime minister than Stephen Harper?

Paulina Rodriguez
age 23, Vancouver

A: Yes. Mostly I think that it's time for a change in government. I don't think the Conservatives have done a great job.

Nick Lopardo
age 24, Vancouver

A: Yes, I think he would. I'm not too pleased about the job the Conservatives have done. I'm also glad the Liberals have a new leader.

Raili Haapalainen
age 24, Vancouver

A: I think so. He's the Liberal leader and I'm a Liberal. Also, he has about an ounce more charisma than Stephen Harper.

Craig Davison
age 38, Ottawa

A: My issue with Ignatieff is that I don't consider him Canadian ... It seems like he's come back with the sole objective of meeting some political desire of his.

Alexandra Ma
age 17, Toronto

A: (Ignatieff). Mainly because I don't like Stephen Harper's view on things and the direction he's leading our country.

Fabienne Chery
age 20, Calgary

A: Michael who? Whoever he is, he can't be worse than Harper. (Harper) wasn't very bright right after the last election.

Letters

Trevor Linden's heart of gold made decision easy

Re: What an honour to have a child named after you.

Linden Jeffries

Trevor Linden is a fine candidate. He has proven himself to be an outstanding leader with a heart of gold. My niece decided that Linden was the only name for their young lad for (those) reasons.

LEAH LEVELY, VIA E-MAIL

Linden proving to be a popular name

My boyfriend and I are big Canucks fans and even bigger Trevor Linden fans. So it wasn't a difficult decision (to choose) the name Linden for our son.

Linden Gaudet

We're going to the Trevor Linden Night game and (think) it would be great to get a picture with Trevor and all the little Lindens.

TAMARA GAUDET, VIA E-MAIL

All pre-trial detainees are equal in the eyes of the law

Re: Suspect on suicide watch

The law regards all individuals who are detained in pre-trial facilities as equal.

It is despicable that Eric Kirkpatrick thinks his alleged actions against another human being makes him superior to a man who uses drugs.

The drug addict also deserves equal rights and treatment, as well as all the individuals in pre-trial. Does the drug addict (who is also presumed innocent before his trial) not deserve to go through withdrawal in peace without Kirkpatrick's discriminating behaviour?

CHENOA RYKS, VIA E-MAIL

Quebec taken to task over naming of tree

Shame on the Liberals in Quebec to entertain such petty issues (Christmas tree or holiday tree) when the country is in recession.

BINDU MATHEW, TORONTO

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Playboy begs forgiveness for Virgin Mary-inspired photos
A nude model resembling the Virgin Mary on the cover of the Mexican edition of Playboy — published days before a major pilgrimage to Mexico City's Virgin of Guadelupe shrine — prompted an apology from the magazine's U.S. headquarters. REUTERS

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Don't forget about forestry aid, industry association says

AID The government must not overlook the limping forestry industry as it helps out the auto and banking sectors, the Forest Products Association of Canada said yesterday.

"We have more employees in the forestry sector than the automobile sector and the banking sector combined," said the association's president, Avrim Lazar, noting the forest-products industry provides 300,000 direct jobs.

The government will consider providing emergency aid to sectors other than automakers, including the beleaguered forestry industry, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said yesterday. REUTERS

In brief

LAYOFFS Quebecor Inc.'s newspaper unit Sun Media said it will cut 600 jobs, or 10 per cent of its workforce, because of the economic downturn and problems in the print industry.

STOCKS U.S. stocks accelerated gains yesterday after the Federal Reserve's interest-rate cut and a smaller-than-feared loss from Goldman Sachs. REUTERS

Telus CFO has no plans to buy BCE

TELECOM Telus Corp. is not pursuing a merger with bigger rival BCE Inc, Telus's chief financial officer Robert McFarlane said yesterday.

"We're just focused on executing our business plan," he said. "We're not working on an acquisition of BCE." REUTERS

Madoff **Running a scheme?**

REUTERS/JOE SKIPPER

A runner passes a home owned by Bernard Madoff in Palm Beach, Fla., yesterday. Prosecutors and regulators have accused the 70-year-old of masterminding a Ponzi scheme of epic proportions through his investment advisory business, which managed at least one hedge fund.

Feds should invest $13B in aid: Experts

The federal government should pump $10 billion to $13 billion in additional spending into the flagging economy in 2009 to help pull the country out of a steep downturn, even though it could result in a deficit of $20 billion or more, the Conference Board of Canada says.

In a report titled Fixing the Recession: Policy Guidance for Canadian Leaders, the Ottawa-based think-tank argued that going into the red "is a price worth paying for an expedited economic recovery and a return of consumer and investor confidence in our economy." But it also called for "a well-developed plan to get back into fiscal balance as soon as the economy recovers."

"Fortunately, Canada is in a much stronger fiscal position than most other nations and can easily absorb fiscal deficits over the near term," Conference Board chief economist Glen Hodgson said.

In its report, the Conference Board argued that monetary policy may be reaching "the limits of its effectiveness" as central banks around the world slash their interest rates.

Citing tight credit markets, an 18-month lag as central bank rate cuts work their way into the economy, and the reluctance of commercial banks to pass on the full impact of rate cuts, the report argued that "fiscal policy must ride to the rescue." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Manning brothers going to Pro Bowl

Peyton and Eli Manning were voted to the Pro Bowl yesterday, the first time quarterback-playing brothers have been chosen for the same all-star game. The New York Jets led all teams with seven selections, including Brett Favre, who will be in his 10th Pro Bowl. There will be six each from the Giants, Vikings and Titans in the game, to be played Feb. 8 in Honolulu. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Harrington PGA player of the year

Padraig Harrington, left, was voted the PGA Tour's player of the year by his peers yesterday, becoming the first European player to win the award since it began in 1990. Harrington's only two wins this year were majors — the British Open and PGA Championship — making him the first European to win successive majors in the same season, and joining Tiger Woods as the only player to achieve that feat in the last 20 years. METRO NEWS SERVICES

JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Leaky Oilers visit GM Place

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SCOTT RINTOUL
for Metro Vancouver

Though it might not feel like it because of the festivities surrounding Trevor Linden's jersey retirement, there is a hockey game tonight at GM Place. The Canucks' face an Oilers' squad that blanked them 3-0 on Saturday in Edmonton, but also one that was hammered 9-2 last night by Chicago. The Canucks and Oilers have split their two meetings to date with each club scoring a total of six goals.

RE-ENTER SANDMAN: Cory Schneider got the win on Sunday versus Florida, but Curtis Sanford will get a chance to redeem himself after a subpar outing in Edmonton on Saturday. Sanford is 3-3 in six starts since Roberto Luongo injured his groin, stopping 90.5 per cent of the shots he's faced, with a 2.84 goals-against average.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Including tonight, the Canucks play 16 of their next 21 games at home, where they have assembled an impressive 8-3-1 record to date.

HE SHOOTS, HE SCORES: Though the league leader has double his goals total, Kyle Wellwood tops the NHL in shooting percentage. Wellwood has scored on 35.3 per cent of his shots, notching 12 goals on just 34 attempts.

LEAKING OIL: After giving up nine goals last night, the Oilers have allowed four or more goals 11 times this season. Edmonton has won just two of those games.

Coaches get extensions

BASKETBALL The coaches of the national men's and women's basketball teams, Leo Rautins and Allison McNeil, have been given contract extensions, but only with the proviso that they get their teams to the 2010 world championships.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Gillis still confident about Sundin

Free agent Mats Sundin is expected to announce tomorrow whether he'll play for the New York Rangers or Vancouver Canucks for the remainder of the NHL season.

Canucks general manager Mike Gillis met with J.P. Barry, Sundin's agent, yesterday and said the star centre is close to making up his mind. Gillis also rejected various media reports that Sundin has already chosen to play for the Rangers, and that the health status of Roberto Luongo would influence his decision in terms of Vancouver.

The nine-time all-star had 32 goals last season with Toronto. He's also the Maple Leafs' all-time leading scorer with 987 points (420 goals, 567 assists).

METRO NEWS SERVICES

NHL 'Hawks hammer Oilers

REUTERS/DAN RIEDLHUBER

Chicago Blackhawks' Dustin Byfuglien, right, watches as the puck gets past Edmonton Oilers goalie Mathieu Garon for a goal in the second period of Chicago's 9-2 win last night. The Oilers will play the Vancouver Canucks tonight at GM Place.

Avery fiasco is completely out of whack

John Chick
john.chick@metronews.ca

This is how a neophyte could sum up the Sean Avery situation:

In the NHL, saying something stupid to a media scrum will get you suspended six games and lead your team to essentially release you. But if you hit somebody headfirst into the boards from behind (as Tom Kostopoulos did to Mike Van Ryn, giving Van Ryn a concussion) you get exactly half that suspension and not cut.

Obviously, it's a little deeper than that. It's clear Avery's teammates didn't want him back, and that was ultimately the reason for his dismissal.

That's fine.

But on another level, the summary is still 100 per cent correct. The hypocrisy of the NHL is one of the many reasons the sport has at times trailed poker and women's college softball in U.S. TV ratings. I'm not calling out Kostopoulos, either — his hit wasn't deliberate, but it was arguably careless and did cause a serious injury. Meanwhile, nothing Avery has done — seeing as his persona non grata status is also the result of his laundry list of antics — ever threatened brain damage on another human being.

Let me be clear that I'm not defending what Avery said. At best, it was juvenile, at worst, misogynistic. When he called out the league for not having stars marketable in the U.S. last summer, of course he was smug and condescending. But he had a point. It's no secret that the culture of hockey is vastly different from that of any other sport. That culture led Brendan Shanahan to once say there could never be a Dennis Rodman in the NHL. The Worm was probably an extreme example, but he was absolutely right.

And that's part of the reason why the NHL will continue to toil in the U.S. marketplace during a recession with a national TV deal that doesn't even guarantee it money. To suspend a player and then have the team get rid of him — for saying something that in any other sport would likely result in a fine and nothing else — may look wonderfully moralistic, but for an entertainment business to play the high horse in a society where prime-time TV features everything from horny teenagers on the upper east side of Manhattan to women opening the bidding on their sexual orientation doesn't wash.

Especially when you are running the only team sports league on the planet where fist-fighting is an encouraged part of the game.

When Ron Artest went into the stands in Detroit four years ago and ignited the brilliantly christened Malice at the Palace, it was widely viewed as the darkest moment in NBA history. Yet '70s-era video of Mike Milbury going into the stands and beating a fan with his own shoe is today considered hysterical. The differences in reaction raise some sociological issues I don't have 60 pages to get into, but one aspect of it is clear.

The NHL doesn't have its priorities straight.

Bettman speaks

- NHL commissioner Gary Bettman elaborated his strongest opinions yet on the Sean Avery situation, calling the player's comments "disgusting" at a luncheon in Edmonton yesterday.

Bertuzzi, Moore meet

NHL Todd Bertuzzi and Steve Moore met across a table Monday in Toronto as part of a court-ordered mediation in a $38-million lawsuit Moore filed after Bertuzzi grabbed him from behind, punched him in the head and landed on top of him during a 2004 NHL game.

Moore, who was a member of the Colorado Avalanche at the time, suffered three fractured vertebrae in his neck and a concussion and hasn't played hockey since. "I think he's probably doing as well as to be expected under the circumstances," Toronto lawyer Tim Danson said of his client, Moore, yesterday. "He still has to deal with the loss of his dream and that's a hard thing to come to grips with."

Bertuzzi

Bertuzzi's former coach Marc Crawford (then bench boss of the Vancouver Canucks for whom Bertuzzi played in 2004) and lawyers for all parties were also present Monday. "All I can say is the mediation has taken place and it has concluded," the lawyer said.

Bertuzzi, the Canucks and the club's parent company are named as defendants in the suit filed by Moore and his family and which is seeking lost income and damages. Bertuzzi has said in legal documents that Crawford should be held responsible for any damages awarded to Moore. Crawford has claimed in other court documents that Bertuzzi disobeyed instructions to leave the ice in Vancouver before Moore was attacked.

Bertuzzi was charged with assault in June 2004 after a four-month investigation. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Atlanta 4 Ottawa 1
Calgary 6 St. Louis 3
Carolina 3 Montreal 2
Chicago 9 Edmonton 2
Toronto 3 New Jersey 2 (SO)
Dallas 2 Phoenix 1 (OT)
Philadelphia 5 Colorado 2
Washington 5 N.Y. Islanders 4 (OT)
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Market downturn signals boon for U.S. career colleges

While public colleges in the U.S. are trying to cope with the current economic downturn, American career colleges are seeing gains. According to data from the U.S.-based Career College Association, for-profit colleges have seen enrolment jump by an average of 17 per cent in the last nine economic downturns. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

Decline in Atlantic Canada

According to new data from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, enrolment at Atlantic universities dropped two per cent between 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Nova Scotia has seen the biggest decrease in enrolment, down six per cent since 2004-2005.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

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Severance can be quite complicated

WorkplaceLaw

Daniel Lublin
dan@canadaemploymentlawyer.com

With 71,000 Canadian jobs having vanished in the month of November alone, tales of mass restructuring have moved from this column's coverage to the front pages of the news. The question I'm most frequently asked now is, what should employees expect if they lose their job and what can they do to protect themselves. Here are the rules of severance:

- Non-union employees in Canada do not have an entitlement to continued employment. That is, an employer is permitted by law to dismiss, as long as an advance warning known as reasonable notice is provided. The objective is to provide the employee with enough working notice to secure another job before being asked to leave his or her current position. However, instead of providing notice, most companies elect to give severance pay instead. What is most often disputed is the amount of notice or pay that an employee is entitled to.
- In determining the amount of notice or severance pay, the first step is to consider whether or not there is an employment contract. If so, the employee may have agreed to receive a specific amount. As this situation creates an unfavourable scenario for employees who may not have known the consequences of signing such an agreement, courts have historically enforced these contract clauses only in very specific situations.
- Without a specific contractual clause, employees are entitled to reasonable notice or severance pay. Many believe that this amount is based on a formula, such as one month per year of service. They are mistaken. Courts do not follow any defined rules in calculating how much severance to pay to a particular employee. Rather, notice or severance pay is based on how long it ought to take the employee to find a comparable position, having regard to his or her age, tenure, position and the availability of another job.
- Notice or severance pay is not limited to an employee's salary. An employee is entitled to all the non-discretionary payments that he or she earned while employed, such as sales commissions, health benefits and even stock options.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@canadaemploymentlawyer.com.

Trades are always the safe bet on job market

Job Trends

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

The aviation and aerospace maintenance industry in Canada is facing a massive shortage of skilled workers.

By 2017, one expert predicts the field will see a shortage of skilled workers equal to the size of the workforce today — approximately 150,000.

Despite air travel numbers falling during the first half of 2008 because of high fuel costs, the executive-director of the Aviation Maintenance Council says it was a short-lived blip and aviation and aerospace production continues to grow.

"Everybody's projecting somewhere between four- and six-per-cent growth in the industry," said Robert Donald.

The aviation maintenance industry is not alone in its projected shortage.

From trades such as carpentry to electrical technicians to plumbing, Canada is in dire need of skilled employees.

Julien Mayr, an aircraft maintenance engineer for a private, aircraft charter and leasing company, says he's barely felt the impact of the current economic downturn.

While Canada's unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage points in November after 71,000 workers across the country lost their jobs, Mayr says there never seems to be enough licensed technicians in his field.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Julien Mayr, left, is pictured here with a colleague in Myanmar several years ago in front of one of the aircrafts he was servicing at the time.

He went into aircraft maintenance and repair after completing an undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Calgary. He couldn't figure out what to do with his BA, and always enjoyed mechanical work.

"The nice thing about the trades is that you're taught to do a specific job," he said. "You have an immediate occupation."

He completed two years of schooling, followed by two years of apprenticeship training in order to get his Aircraft Maintenance Engineer licence.

The Government of Canada plays a central role in ensuring Canada's economy is equipped with a highly skilled workforce, says Jason Bouzanis, spokesman for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

The Apprenticeship Incentive Grant, for example, is a taxable $1,000 cash grant available to apprentices registered in a Red Seal trade who have completed their first and/or second level of their apprenticeship program on or after January 2007.

As in many trades these days, the money in aircraft maintenance is good and jobs are full time with benefits and sometimes full pension plans.

Donald says licensed technicians can pull in a salary ranging from between $60,000 to $100,000 a year with overtime and benefits.

And there's certainly no concern of losing one's job in this industry, he said.

"I project that young people with the right skills will have their choice of any number of jobs and the competition for those employees will only increase as time goes on."

Also good

- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada provides a listing of occupations and their employment prospects over the next several years. The following is a snapshot of some of the trades with a better than average outlook in Canada:
- Construction managers
- Electricians
- Steamfitters, pipefitters, sprinkler system installers
- Ironworkers
- Carpenters
- Bricklayers
- Concrete finishers
- Heavy equipment mechanics

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BCIT student blogs capture life on campus
Since the 2006-2007 academic year, the British Columbia Institute of Technology has provided a forum for students to blog about life at the institution. This year there are nine student bloggers, enrolled in varied programs. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Love motivates Hanomansing

ETHAN ROTBERG
for Metro Canada

For Ian Hanomansing, there was no Plan B.

The CBC news anchor, who won his first Gemini award on Nov. 28, recalls that from a young age he knew he wanted to be in broadcasting.

Hanomansing, who was born in Trinidad and Tobago and grew up in Sackville, N.B., remembers as a child being able to hear New York and Boston radio stations from his home.

"I became absolutely entranced with radio at a young age," he said. "It was really magical for me to hear those stations so far away."

His broadcast career started at CKDH in Amherst, N.S. during the summer after graduating from Mount Allison University. He later started working for CBC at bureaus in the Maritimes and Toronto before moving to Vancouver 20 years ago.

"I became absolutely entranced with radio at a young age. It was really magical for me to hear those stations so far away."
Ian Hanomansing

As a reporter, Hanomansing has covered some of the most important recent events. Several stick out in his mind such as the L.A. riots in 1992, the Stanley Cup riots in Vancouver in 1994 and the Canadian's Gold Medal win in Salt Lake City in 2002.

Now, after working for the CBC for 22 years, his Gemini win for Best News Anchor in Canada has him feeling philosophical.

"When you are nominated and don't win, it gives you a better perspective on winning," he said. "The Gemini doesn't make you a better anchor, only that a group of people thought you were the best on that particular day. It is gratifying though, it's a nice recognition."

His advice to people just starting their career is that sometimes you have to teach yourself how to get there.

"I never had any broadcast training," he explained. "I either learned by myself or learned from the person above me. Its important to think about what you want and then figure out how to get it."

For Hanomansing his goals are simply to continue to have the opportunity to work on good assignments.

"Most of the time I love my job. That's how I'm motivated."

ETHAN ROTBERG/FOR METRO CANADA
Ian Hanomansing at the CBC studio in Vancouver.

Training put on back burner in new economy

Training is taking a back seat to other priorities in some accounting departments, a new survey suggests.

Nearly one in five (18 per cent) chief financial officers (CFOs) interviewed said they don't expect to offer employee training in the next two years. Among companies that do have training programs planned, 30 per cent of finance executives plan to invest in information technology (IT) skills development and another 26 per cent foresee offering courses in accounting and finance.

The survey was developed by Accountemps and conducted by an independent research firm. It was based on interviews with more than 1,400 CFOs.

"Employers seek accountants who are able to maximize technology to reduce inefficiencies and enhance profitability," said Max Messmer, chairman of Accountemps.

Accountemps offers the following three tips for enacting training and development initiatives that don't break the bank:

- Explore e-learning options. The Internet offers a wide variety of effective training options for professionals while also saving employers the time and expense of sending personnel off-site for instruction.
- Take advantage of trade associations. Encourage staff to join professional organizations. These groups provide opportunities for their members — often at a substantial discount — to update their knowledge of business and industry fundamentals and acquire new skills through seminars, workshops and online courses.
- Establish a mentoring program. Mentoring is a cost-effective, easy-to-implement method to provide hands-on training to employees and promote knowledge transfer between seasoned and less-experienced professionals.

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The economy is slowing, so courses are filling fast.
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Automotive

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EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Small car, big ideas

Yaris lives up to Toyota's formidable reputation

LORNE DRURY
for Metro Canada

Toyota has built its reputation on selling high-quality, fuel-efficient, economical vehicles.

One of the most economical and popular choices in the Toyota line-up is the Yaris, which comes in both hatchback and sedan styles.

Starting at about $13,210 for the hatchback and $13,945 for the sedan, Yaris is a surprisingly roomy subcompact that gets great fuel economy and provides a lot more amenities than you'd expect for the starting price.

Power is supplied by a 106-hp, 1.5-litre DOHC four-cylinder engine, mated with either a five-speed manual or a four-speed automatic transmission.

While gasoline prices are back to reasonable levels as this is written, there's no telling where they'll be at this time next year, so gas misers like the Yaris are becoming more popular by the day.

2009 Toyota Yaris

Type: Subcompact
Price: $13,210 hatchback, $13,945 sedan
Engine: 1.5L four-cylinder
HP: 106

Highlights

- Fuel efficient
- Seats five
- Quick and responsive

Transport Canada fuel consumption ratings list the 2009 Toyota Yaris sedan with automatic at 7.0L/100 km (40 mpg) city and 5.7L/100 km (50 mpg) highway.

For 2009, the Yaris has been refreshed somewhat with an enhanced front grille design and upgrade packages.

"For many of us, the Yaris is the best of both worlds: A small car that's easy on fuel and Canadian wallets, yet fully capable of moving five adults or a trunk packed with luggage when the need arises," says Warren Orton, director at Toyota Canada.

The 2009 Toyota Yaris provides outstanding fuel economy with a starting price of $13,945 for the four-door sedan and $13,210 for the hatchback model.

"For many of us, the Yaris is the best of both worlds: A small car that's easy on fuel and Canadian wallets, yet fully capable of moving five adults or a trunk packed with luggage when the need arises."
Toyota Canada director Warren Orton

"Small car" are the key words here, although you wouldn't know it from inside the cabin. You can fit five people in the Yaris, but the back seat is really more suited to children.

I found the front seat legroom more than adequate, but the seats themselves could do with a bit more padding. A long road trip might be a bit hard.

One oddity in the Yaris is the positioning of the instrument cluster on the centre of the dashboard. I found it distracting always having to look right to check your speed.

Otherwise, the cabin is better than one might expect in an entry-level subcompact.

Ride and handling is good in the Yaris, which features quick and responsive electric rack and pinion power steering. Even on the roughest of roads, the Yaris soaks up the bumps quite nicely. Acceleration is adequate to get you up to speed in merging traffic and when overtaking slower moving vehicles.

All in all, the Yaris is a solid commuter that is fuel-efficient and family-friendly.

The instrument cluster on the 2009 Toyota Yaris sits directly above the centre stack, which features easy-to-use knobs and buttons.

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See your Ford Dealer for complete details or call the Ford Customer Relationship Centre at 1-800-565-3673. *Receive the following price adjustments (delivery allowance) on the cash purchase, purchase finance or lease of the following 2009 model vehicles: [$6000 on Explorer Sport Trac 4x2 and 4x4]/[$4000 on F-250-450 (excl. Chassis Cab), and F-350-550 Chassis Cabs]/[$3000 on Mustang V6, Mustang V8, and Shelby GT500]/[$2500 on Taurus]/[$2000 on Fusion SEL]/[$1500 on Ranger Super Cab 4x4 and 4x2 (excl. XL), Escape XLT V6, and Escape Limited V6]/[$1000 on Fusion SE]/[$500 on Escape XLT I4, and Escape Limited I4]. ‡0% APR purchase financing for 60 months on select 2009 Ford vehicles (excluding Focus S, Mustang V6 & V8, Shelby GT500, Shelby GT500 KR, Taurus, Explorer 4Dr, Explorer Sport Trac 4x2 & 4x4, Escape Hybrid, Expedition, E-Series and F-250 – F-550) for a maximum of 60 months to qualified retail customers, on approved credit from Ford Credit. E.g., $20,000 purchase financed at 0.0% purchase APR for 60 months, monthly payment is $333.33, cost of borrowing is $0 or APR of 0% and total to be repaid is $20,000. This is a sample calculation only. Down payment on purchase financing offers may be required based on approved credit. **Receive the following price adjustment (delivery allowance) on the cash purchase, purchase finance or lease of the following 2008 model vehicles: [$12,000 on F-150 Super Cab 4x2, Super Cab 4x4, Super Crew 4x2 (excl. Lariat), Chip Foose, and Super Crew 4x4 (excl. Lariat)]/[$11,000 on F250-450 and F350-550 Chassis Cabs]/[$10,000 on Expedition, Explorer Sport Trac 4x2 and 4x4]/[$9000 on Fusion SEL, and Taurus X Limited]/[$7500 on Fusion SE, Mustang V8, Shelby GT500, Taurus Limited, Edge Limited, Explorer (4 Dr), Escape XLT V6, Escape Limited V6, Taurus X SEL, and F-150 Regular Cab]/[$7000 on Edge SEL]/[$6000 on Mustang V6, Taurus SEL, Ranger Super Cab 4x4 and 4x2 (excl. XL), and Escape XLT I4]/[$5500 on Ranger Super Cab XL]/[$5000 on Escape XLS]/[$4500 on Focus Sedan & Coupe (excl S)]/[$3500 on Ranger Regular Cab XL and FEL]/[$3000 on Focus Sedan & Coupe S]/[$1500 on E-Series Club Wag. & Van]/[$12,500 on F150 Super Crew Lariat]. †Cash purchase a new 2008 Ford Focus SE 4 Door with automatic transmission / 2009 Ford Fusion SE I4 with automatic transmission / 2008 Ford Escape XLT V6 4x4 / 2009 Ford Flex SEL FWD / 2008 Ford Edge SEL FWD / 2008 Ford Edge SEL AWD for $14,999/$22,499/$21,999/$34,999/$25,999/$27,999 after price adjustment (delivery allowance) of $4,500/$1,000/$7,500/$0 /$7,000/$7,000 deducted. Taxes payable on full amount of purchase price after purchase price adjustment deducted. ****$0 first two months' payments required on the purchase finance or lease of most new 2008 and 2009 Ford vehicles. Effective December 2, 2008, vehicles must be delivered on or before January 2, 2009. First two months payments will be paid up to a total of $1,000 ($500 per monthly payment). Offer only available to customers who purchase finance or lease through Ford Credit. Offer not available to cash purchase customers. Offer is only available at participating dealers and (OAC) from Ford Credit. Offer is only combinable with offers/incentives in effect at the time of delivery. This program may not be deferred. Some restrictions apply, see participating dealer for details. ††e.g. Lease a new 2009 Ford Flex SEL FWD for a monthly payment of $399 per month based on a lease annual percentage rate (APR) of 1.99% and a 48 month lease and receive up to $500 towards each of the first and second month' lease payments and then for the remaining 46 months of the lease contract, you pay only $399 per month based on an APR of 1.99% over the remaining term from Ford Credit to qualified retail lessees, on approved credit. $3,450 down payment required. Total lease obligation is $21,804 and optional buyout is $14,196 plus applicable taxes. Some conditions and a mileage restriction of 80,000 km over 48 months apply to all lease offers. A charge of 12 cents per km over mileage restriction applies, plus applicable taxes. All lease payments are calculated with no trade-in. $0 security deposit required in example, but may be required. ‡‡e.g. Purchase finance a new 2009 Ford Fusion SE I4 for $20,299 (after price adjustment of $1,000 and down payment of $2,200 deducted) and receive up to $500 towards each of the first and second month's purchase financing payments and then for the remaining 70 months of the 72 month purchase finance contract, purchase finance with 1.99% purchase APR and monthly payments of $299 to qualified retail customers, on approved credit from Ford Credit. Cost of borrowing is $1,253 or APR of 1.99% and total to be repaid is $20,930. Taxes payable on full amount of purchase price before deductions of first two payments. All offers on 2008 Ford Focus SE 4 Door with automatic transmission / 2009 Ford Fusion SE I4 with automatic transmission / 2008 Escape XLT V6 4x4 / 2009 Ford Flex SEL FWD / 2008 Ford Edge SEL FWD / 2008 Ford Edge SEL AWD include air tax & freight of $1,250/$1,400/$1,400/$1,400/$1,400/$1,400. All offers exclude licence, insurance, registration, PPSA, administration fees and all applicable taxes. †††Fuel consumption ratings are based on Transport Canada approved test methods. Actual fuel consumption may vary based on road conditions, vehicle loading, driving habits and the addition of certain vehicle accessories. Fuel efficiency figures for the 2008 Ford Focus 2.0L automatic based on the EnerGuide, 2008. Fuel efficiency figures for the 2009 Ford Fusion 2.3L automatic based on Transport Canada approved test methods. Actual Fuel efficiency may vary based on driving conditions and the addition of certain vehicle accessories. Distances based on Gas Tank volume of 51L/66L. ‡‡‡Standard on most new Ford vehicles, includes 6-month prepaid subscription. See your Ford of Canada Dealer or contact SIRIUS® at 1-888-539-7474 for more information. "SIRIUS" and the SIRIUS™ dog logo are registered trademarks of SIRIUS Satellite Radio Inc. ***Most 2008/2009 Ford vehicles, excluding 2008/2009 Model LCF, F-650 and F-750, come with a 5 year/100,000 km (whichever occurs first) Powertrain Warranty and full Roadside Assistance benefits together with a 5 year/100,000 km (whichever occurs first) Safety Restraint Warranty. In addition, on all 2008/2009 Model F-SuperDuty vehicles equipped with the diesel engine, the Powertrain warranty is extended to 5 year/160,000 km (whichever occurs first), which equals the Diesel engine warranty. Some conditions and limitations apply. Ask your Ford of Canada dealer for more information on these warranties and coverages. •Some conditions may apply to the Graduate Recognition Program. See Dealer for details. Dealer may sell or lease for less. Limited time offers. Offers may be cancelled or changed at any time without notice. All offers are mutually exclusive and cannot be combined. Dealership may have limited quantities. Dealer trade may be required. Allow 8-10 weeks delivery on 2009 model factory orders. See Dealer for details.

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MINI E: The future's electric

Green car demonstrates the power of plug-ins at L.A. Auto Show

JIM ROBINSON
for Metro Canada

The MINI E is an all-electric two-seater that has a range of about 150-plus miles with a top of speed of about 150 km/h.

The MINI signature central gauge includes an LED display indicating power consumption in red and power recuperation in green.

MINI E

Type: Luxury electric two-seater
Price: Not available
HP: 204

Highlights

- All electric
- Regenerative braking
- Smooth ride

The MINI stand at the Los Angeles Auto Show is one of the last places I expected to find one of the biggest green car stories of the year, but that's what the MINI E is now.

While the Chevy Volt is still months, and perhaps now years away, BMW, which owns MINI, presented the electrically powered MINI E to the global media for the first time in Los Angeles.

Not merely a concept car, 500 MINI E vehicles will be shipped to California, New York and New Jersey for testing with private and corporate customers.

MINI had a veritable fleet of them available for test drives and it proved eye opening, especially the acceleration which would leave many performance cars in the dust.

BMW is on record as stating it plans to be in series production in the mid-term of all-electric vehicles, starting with the MINI E, as part of the company's "No. 1" strategy.

The MINI E's electric drive produces a peak power of 204 hp and 162 lb/ft of torque that is routed to the front wheels through a single-stage helical gearbox.

On the street, the MINI E goes from 0-100 km/h in 8.5 seconds with an electronically limited top speed of 152 km/h.

Range is subjective but with 58 per cent power in the battery, I was told that was good for about 100 miles which I assume meant in-town, not highway.

The MINI E is based on the current hatchback model but will be offered only as a two-seater because the massive lithium-ion battery pack takes up the entire back seat and most of the rear cargo space leaving room for a small carry-on bag or two.

A car like this in the city makes a believer in an electric future out of anyone.

The lithium-ion storage unit has a maximum capacity of 35 kilowatt hours (kWh) and transmits energy to the electric motor as direct current at a nominal 380 volts. The rechargeable battery is made up of 5,088 cells grouped into 48 modules. These modules are packaged into three battery elements that are compactly arranged inside the MINI E.

According to the people I spoke with, a full recharge draws a maximum of 28-kilowatt hours of electricity from the grid. Roughly speaking, a kilowatt-hour translates into 5.4 miles for a total of about 150-plus miles depending on your driving habits.

Starting is basically the same as the MINI with an electronic key fob that is inserted into a slot on the dash and then a starter button is pushed. There is no sound at startup. Pull the transmission mounted shifter back to Drive and you're ready to go, but don't hit the accelerator too hard because the MINI E takes off like a rocket. With 204 hp, it is about the same at the turbocharged MINI Cooper S but without any noise.

Every time the driver lifts off the accelerator pedal, the electric motor acts as a generator. This results in braking force, and the power recovered from the kinetic energy is fed back to the battery.

This interaction ensures a comfortable and smooth driving experience. In city traffic, some 75 per cent of all deceleration can be done without the brakes. Making substantial use of this energy regeneration feature extends the car's range by up to 20 per cent.

Regenerative braking feels like a parachute being popped open. And each time you lift, the brake lights come on to warn drivers behind you because the deceleration is so abrupt. You can get around it by left foot braking but that seriously lessens range because the whole system depends on as much regenerative power as possible.

A car like this in the city makes a believer in an electric future out of anyone. But Los Angeles is one thing and Canada is another.

How it would perform in the winter with the heater and lights on would be an issue, as anyone with electric heat at home will tell you.

But the great thing about the MINI E, and the "green" cars at the Los Angeles Auto Show, is that something is being done and there is a future for the automobile.

And it seems to be dawning on a lot of us who have covered the auto industry for years that electric is emerging as the best solution and it's cars like the MINI E that are leading the way.

Mercedes BlueTEC a hit with celebrities

CLEAN CAR When Academy Award nominee Naomi Watts celebrated her 40th birthday in Los Angeles recently, her partner Liev Schreiber (X-Men, The Manchurian Candidate) surprised her with a spectacular present: a Mercedes-Benz ML320 BlueTEC.

Liev and Naomi are among the many actors and musicians to discover the exceptional performance and efficiency of Mercedes-Benz BlueTEC, the world's cleanest, state-of-the-art diesel technology.

In addition to Liev Schreiber and Naomi Watts, fellow BlueTEC clean diesel drivers from motion pictures and television include Desperate Housewives star Kyle McLaughlin, Sex and the City siren Kim Cattrall, Academy Award nominee and Golden Globe Winner Gary Oldman, and Phantom of the Opera star and singer Emmy Rossum.

Phantom of the Opera star and singer Emmy Rossum is shown refueling a Mercedes-Benz BlueTEC.

"My ML320 BlueTEC has all the power and luxury you'd expect of a Mercedes-Benz, plus the efficiency and low environmental impact of an economy or even hybrid vehicle," says Emmy Rossum. "BlueTEC really is the best of both worlds."

Seven-time Grammy winning artist Alanis Morissette chose the fuel-efficient Mercedes-Benz BlueTEC for the video of Underneath, the first single and video from her 2008 album, Flavors of Entanglement.

"Making green choices on a local level is important in creating global change," says Morissette. "I'm glad that Mercedes-Benz has introduced a great option with BlueTEC."

Starring in...

- BlueTEC has also starred in some of the hottest television shows this season, including 90210, The Amazing Race, Privileged, Starter Wife, and The Tonight Show with Jay Leno.

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Vibe GT shown.

The Pontiac Vibe achieved a top 3 finish in the Canadian Driver.com 50-litre Challenge™ for fuel efficiency.¥

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- 5-speed manual transmission
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- StabiliTrak™ electronic stability control system
- OnStar® with 1-year Safe & Sound plan£

36/46 mpg 7.8/6.2 L/100km (City/Hwy)▲

★★★★★Highest Possible U.S. Government Frontal Crash Safety Rating△

ALL NEW 2009 PONTIAC G3 WAVE

OWN IT FOR

CASH PURCHASE PRICE		BI-WEEKLY PAYMENT		PURCHASE FINANCING
$11,698†	OR	$98** WITH		2.9%*
INCLUDES FREIGHT AND PDI		WITH $3,035 DOWN		FOR 60 MONTHS Effective Finance APR: 13.4%

- 1.6L DOHC engine
- 5-speed manual transmission
- CD stereo with MP3 input jack
- 60/40 split-folding rear seat
- Frontal airbags w/passenger sensing system
- Theft deterrent system with immobilizer

★★★★★Highest Possible U.S. Government Frontal Crash Safety Rating△

50 MPG HIGHWAY▲

36/50 mpg 7.9/5.7 L/100km (City/Hwy)▲

2009 PONTIAC G5 XFE

OWN IT FOR

CASH PURCHASE PRICE		BI-WEEKLY PAYMENT		PURCHASE FINANCING
$13,398†	OR	$108** WITH		0%*
INCLUDES FREIGHT AND PDI		WITH $2,195 DOWN		FOR 60 MONTHS Effective Finance APR: 8.1%

- 155hp 2.2L ECOTEC engine
- 5-speed Getrag manual transmission
- CD stereo with MP3 input jack
- Theft deterrent system with immobilizer

The new G5 XFE gets up to 10% better fuel economy than ever before.

52 MPG HIGHWAY▲

35/52 mpg 8.0/5.4 L/100km (City/Hwy)▲

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NOW AT YOUR BC PONTIAC BUICK GMC DEALERS. bcpontiacdealers.ca ‡Offer applies to the purchase of 2009 Pontiac Vibe FWD 1SM, equipped as described. †Offers apply to the cash purchase of 2009 Pontiac G3 Wave 5-Door 1SM/2009 Pontiac G5 Coupe or Sedan 1SP, equipped as described. Cash purchase prices reflect discounts or other incentives which are only available on cash purchase offers. By selecting lease or financing offers, consumers will be foregoing such discounts and incentives which may results in higher effective interest rates. See your participating GM dealers for conditions and details. *Purchase financing available on select 2009 models on approved GMAC credit only. Down payment and/or trade may be required. Monthly payment and cost of borrowing will vary depending on amount borrowed and down payment/trade. Example: $10,000 at 0% for 60 months, the bi-weekly payment is $76.92, cost of borrowing is $0, total obligation is $10,000. **Offers apply to 2009 Pontiac Vibe FWD 1SM/G3 Wave 5-Door 1SM/G5 Coupe or Sedan 1SP, equipped as described. Based on a 60/60/60 month term. A down payment of $1,595/$3,035/$2,195 is required for the $118/$98/$108 bi-weekly payment at 0%/2.9%/0%. Total obligation is $16,998/$15,839/$16,298. Cost of borrowing is $0/$891/$0. Offers with 0% purchase financing are unconditionally interest free. ‡/†/**Freight included. License, insurance, registration, PPSA, administration fees and taxes not included. Offers apply as indicated to 2009 new or demonstrator models, dealer order or trade may be necessary, and applies only to qualified retail customers in BC/Yukon. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Limited time offer which may not be combined with other offers. See your participating GM dealers for conditions and details. ◊Warranty based on 5 years or 160,000 km, whichever comes first. Excludes Medium Duty Trucks. See dealer for conditions and details. £Service contract required. OnStar® uses existing emergency service providers as well as cellular and satellite technologies. Vehicle electrical system needs to be operating for features to function properly. ♦GMCL will pay the first two months' GMAC finance payments for finance terms up to 60 months only, paid up to a maximum monthly finance payment of $400 (tax included). Offer applicable to equal monthly payment finance agreements with GMAC and subject to GMAC credit approval. Program not available to recipients of any previous GM student/graduate offer. Visit www.gmstudentbonus.ca for more details. △Donated vehicles must be licensed and insured for the previous, consecutive six (6) months. For complete eligibility information go to www.carheaven.ca/utilities/legal.aspx. ¥U.S. Government star ratings are part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) New Car Assessment Program (NCAP). The 2009 Pontiac Wave 5-Door and 2009 Pontiac Vibe received a 5-Star rating for the driver and front passenger in the frontal crash test. For more information on safety ratings, go to www.safercar.gov. ▲Estimated 2009 ratings, based on GM testing in accordance with approved Transport Canada testing methods. Your actual fuel consumption may vary. ▼More information on the Canadian Driver.com 50-Litre Challenge™ can be found online at: www.canadiandriver.com/50litre.

A buyer's market in '09

AutoPilot

Michael Goetz

Veteran auto journalist

All the automakers are ready to deal. The usual suspects will continue to discount, but they have been joined by brands, like Toyota and BMW, who were previously thought to have discount-resistant DNA.

Well, good day. The nice people at Metro have offered me this perch, so I might pontificate on automotive matters on a weekly basis.

I'll start with a warning: I sometimes get over-excited by car stuff and could spray spittle while I talk. If that happens, you might want to move back a bit.

Actually I won't really be pontificating (too much), as I hate being preached to as the next guy. I'm just going to throw out some news, views, trends, ideas, and stories your way, to contribute to the ongoing dialogue people just can't stop having about vehicles, car culture, and driving. My fervent wish that one day it might be thought of as a good bottle of 5W30 synthetic — car talk lubrication you could count on.

And the topic for today is 2009.

Don't know if you've noticed, but there's this thing called the global economic crisis and 2009 just might be the year the North American auto industry goes to hell in a hybrid hand basket.

But for anybody contemplating a vehicle purchase, 2009 is shaping up really, really nicely.

For one thing, all the automakers are ready to deal. The usual suspects will continue to discount, but they have been joined by brands, like Toyota and BMW, who were previously thought to have discount-resistant DNA.

Honda is probably the next convert, as it didn't match Toyota's recent reductions, and suffered the consequences, with poor sales during November and December.

And for all the talk of tight credit, we've yet to see that become a factor on the showroom floor. GM, Ford and Chrysler, will no longer use low monthly leasing rates to drive sales, because, well, because it almost killed them (through a combination of overly optimistic resale values and getting saddled with gangly vehicles that were a tough sell when crude was over 100 bucks a barrel).

But interest rates are still way low, and most automakers offer very attractive financing deals. Be cognizant, however, that some of these numbers are possible because the term of the loan has been pushed to five, six, or seven years.

Of course, the main attraction is the cars, and there is an unusually large number of intriguing new products and technologies to watch, and possibly secure for your driveway, in 2009.

This product expansion has been brought on by the push for global cars and green cars, low-sulphur diesel finally being available at North American pumps, and sheer panic on the part of the world's automakers. (Ever notice how wide awake you are, after you've had a sphincter moment?)

We'll look more closely at those automotive trends, and possibly a few more bodily functions, in future instalments of Auto Pilot.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for more than 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

Punching out 525 hp and capable of speeds up to 196 mph, the Audi R8 is now available with a 5.2-litre V10 engine.

Audi strikes sports-car gold

Audi is sending shockwaves through the sports-car establishment yet again with the new R8 V10, a 10-cylinder, 525 hp, 196 mph evolution of the quattro four-wheel-driven sports car.

The new 5.2-litre FSI V10 gasoline engine mounted longitudinally directly behind the cockpit is almost identical in construction to the unit powering the recently announced R8 LMS that will race at customer level in the GT3 class.

It contributes only 31kg more to the overall weight of the all-aluminum-bodied R8 than the existing V8, taking it to 1,620kg, and making possible an impressive power-to-weight ratio of 324 hp per ton.

The direct injection engine rockets the R8 through the 62mph barrier in just 3.9 seconds as it revs freely to its 8,700rpm limit in each of its six ratios.

When linked to the R tronic transmission it can reach 124 mph in only 12 seconds, and in the right conditions can maintain its breathtaking momentum all the way to 196 mph, an unprecedented high for a road-going Audi.

By mounting the 10-cylinder unit as close as possible to the centre of the R8, Audi engineers have achieved near perfect 44 per cent front / 56 per cent rear weight distribution for optimum handling balance.

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*Discount offered on cash purchases for new and in stock 2008 City Golf / Rabbit models in the amount of $2,000/$2,500. **Limited time finance offer available through Volkswagen Finance, a division of VW Credit Canada Inc., on approved credit. Financing at 0.9% for 36 months equals $469/$600 per month. Down payment or equivalent trade-in, due at signing, may be required. Cost of borrowing is $232/$297 for a total obligation of $16,867/$21,307. Freight and PDI of $1,335 included. PPSA, license, insurance, registration, dealer charges, options, and applicable taxes are extra. MSRP for 2008 City Golf model as shown with Bravo accessory wheels is $18,671. MSRP for 2008 3-door Rabbit as shown is $27,645 with body kit and 18" wheels. Dealer may sell for less. At participating Volkswagen dealerships only. Offer valid until December 31, 2008 and is subject to change or cancellation without notice. Supplies limited. See dealer for details. Certain conditions apply. "Volkswagen", the Volkswagen logo and "Rabbit" are registered trademarks of Volkswagen AG. "City Golf" is a trademark of Volkswagen AG. © 2008 Volkswagen Canada.

Luck of the draw
One of the more unusual measures of economic uncertainty being reported nowadays concerns the takings of casinos on the Las Vegas Strip. According to Reuters, the casinos won 26 per cent less money from gamblers in October than they did a year earlier. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Travel

Ancient Egypt exhibit

From Friday to Aug. 16, 2009, Ottawa's Museum of Civilization will host an exhibit called Tombs of Eternity: The Afterlife in Ancient Egypt. The artifacts on display will include sarcophagi, amulets, sculptures, beads, weapons, jewelry and human and animal mummies. The basalt sarcophagus lid at left is part of the exhibit. See civilization.ca for details. METRO NEWS SERVICES

TRAVELDESK@METRONEWS.CA

Getting an eyeful at NYC's Museum of Sex

This institution brings a whole new meaning to 'too much information'

The**Travel**Junkie

While Manhattan is home to dozens of cultural museums dedicated to high-brow art, it has only one cultural institution where you can fondle a love doll, watch panda porn and learn about the sexual habits of the honey bee.

The Museum of Sex, which opened in 2002, claims to be the most "stimulating museum in New York." You can find a handful of sex museums scattered across Europe and Asia, but this one favours information rather than just titillation — specifically, it aims to "preserve and present the history, evolution and cultural significance of human sexuality."

Since the Museum of Sex, a.k.a MoSex, is set to spice up its permanent collection, I figured this was a good time to check it out.

The first — and certainly most interesting — of its three galleries contains an exhibit called The Sex Lives of Animals. Strolling amidst photo displays and anatomically correct statues of creatures mid-coitus, I learn that plenty of animals mate for reasons other than procreation.

Apparently, they engage in all sorts of acts for pleasure — just two of more memorable pursuits I learned about involved the West Indian manatee and the Gray whale, both of which indulge in some remarkable group activities.

The exibit also illustrates how prevalent homosexuality is in nature. It's a form of social bonding, affection and courtship that has been documented in over 500 species, including lions, penguins and primates.

I walked past a wall of tapir, ostrich and killer whale genitaliato the next exhibit, called Action: Sex and the Moving Image. This selection of media clips looks at the history of sex on film, from metaphorical movies dating back to the 1930s through burlesque flicks and modern day pornography.

Surprisingly, the most shocking things I saw were Pamela Anderson and Paris Hilton's explicit sex tapes. With videos like these, it's no wonder that visitors have to be at least 18 years old to enter the museum.

I dragged myself from the den of cinematic sin to the final gallery, a room filled with a mishmash of paraphernalia: squeezable latex love dolls, a nine-foot S&M suspension cage, anime videos, pinup posters and antique vibrators.

I leave the Museum of Sex with the following conclusions: One, human sexuality is complicated; two, our concepts of sex, norms and taboos are constantly changing; and three, West Indian manatees are having more sex than I am.

JULIA DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

The Museum of Sex — MoSex, for short — in New York City takes a scholarly approach to its subject.

MoSex

- For information on admission fees, hours and discounted tickets visit museumofsex.com.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing on OLN, and editor of thetraveljunkie.ca.

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Jack Black visits The Office
Comedian Jack Black is set to guest star in hit show The Office. The actor will appear in an episode slated to air in February, right after the SuperBowl. IMDB.COM

Entertainment

More Will

Actor Will Smith is in talks to reprise two of his most successful recent movie roles in a Hancock sequel and a prequel to I Am Legend. IMDB.COM

Twilight sequel harder, star says

MOVIES The surprise success of Twilight, the teen vampire movie that boasted a bigger opening North American weekend box office than the new James Bond, could make the sequel harder to sell, its leading actors said.

The movie, based on the novel by Stephenie Meyer, made $69.6 million US in movie theatres over its first weekend last month. "We had nothing to lose in the first one," said British actor Robert Pattinson.

Guilty plea in Guns piracy case

MUSIC A man accused of illegally posting songs on the Internet from an unreleased album by rock band Guns N' Roses has pleaded guilty and faces up to one year in prison, a prosecutor said.

Kevin Cogill, 28, pleaded guilty to a copyright violation. The charge was reduced because he is cooperating with authorities to identify the source of the leak.

Metallica confirm Guitar Hero game

MUSIC Metallica has finally confirmed "the worst-kept secret in rock'n'roll" and unveiled details of the upcoming Guitar Hero game devoted to the band. According to metallica.com the game "allows you to play as us in either single instrument or band career game modes" and will be released next year. REUTERS

Anti-Christmas fun

Take a break from the irritating well-wishing with these classics

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

As we enter the last shopping week before the most commercial of all holidays, it's getting to be that special time of year when everyone gets a little sick of Christmas.

After all, you can only hear the high pitched squeal of the Chipmunks whining about wanting "a hula hoop" while you claw your way through the riotous mob of mall shoppers so many times before your holiday cheer turns into black bile.

Fortunately a number of filmmakers have developed their own antidotes to the Christmas season. Here are a few films you can watch when a break from all the carolling and irritating well-wishing is needed.

- **THE REF:** Ted Demme may have died tragically young, but at least he gave us the finest anti-Christmas comedy before he left. Dennis Leary stars as a chain-smoking jewel thief who holds a dysfunctional family hostage on Christmas Eve. More holiday movies should have an emotional climax in which Kevin Spacey tells his mother, "You know what I'm going to get you next Christmas, Mom? A big wooden cross, so that every time you feel unappreciated for your sacrifices, you can climb on up and nail yourself to it."
- **BAD SANTA:** Director Terry Zwigoff says that he and his ghost screenwriters, the Coen brothers, used to describe Bad Santa as "the Christmas movie only three Jews could make." Considering the fact that this film stars a foul-mouthed elf, a woman with a Santa fetish, and a safe-cracking mall Santa who gets drunk and pees his pants on the job, they've got a point.
- **DIE HARD:** It's not commonly discussed, but the movie that made Bruce Willis a star is not only set at Christmas but ends with a rendition of Let It Snow. If there's a better way of ringing in the holidays then watching Willis shoot Alan Rickman with a gun concealed on his back with tape that reads "Seasons Greetings," I haven't found it.
- **GREMLINS:** Joe Dante's mini-monster classic gleefully sends up the holiday with puppet monsters tearing apart a Frank Capra-esque town on Christmas Eve. The scene in which the Gremlins take up caroling and Phoebe Cates' darkly comic monologue about the Christmas her father died while playing Santa can only be fully appreciated at the peak of a yuletide burnout.
- **BRAZIL:** Though not overtly about Christmas, Terry Gilliam's dystopian classic gleefully satirizes every element of 20th century excess; including the holiday season. The movie opens with a family huddled around the Christmas tree when an anti-terrorist swat team bursts through the ceiling and arrests the father at gunpoint. If a scene like that doesn't get you in the holiday spirit, nothing will.

Actor Billy Bob Thornton portrays a mall santa in the anti-Christmas movie Bad Santa.

Wally Lamb on time, tragedy and Oprah

By the summer of 1999, Wally Lamb was the best-selling author of two hugely popular novels. But his literary credentials didn't cut much ice with the tough crowd he encountered during a speaking engagement at York Correctional Facility, a women's prison in Connecticut.

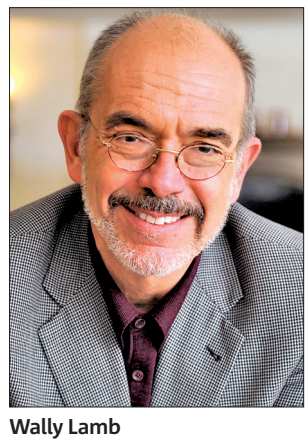
"I doubt that more than one or two of them had read either of my books," recalled Lamb, during a Toronto stop last week to promote his newly published third title, The Hour I First Believed.

Lamb's 1992 debut She's Come Undone and the 1998 follow-up, I Know This Much is True, had both been selected for the influential Oprah book club.

"Her endorsement is a boon and a blessing, but you also have to figure out how to deal with it," he said. "I struggled with that for a fair amount of time when I started to write this novel."

Even then, The Hour I First Believed took nearly nine years to complete. On the day Lamb was invited to speak at the prison, he was wrapping up a university teaching post with the intention of writing full-time. Instead, he ended up launching a creative-writing program at the prison that yielded two anthologies of the inmates' efforts. The experience serves a significant backdrop to The Hour I First Believed, which is partly set in a Connecticut correctional institution for women.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE


Wally Lamb

Rachel in a cat suit?
Actress Rachel Weisz is reportedly the favourite of movie bosses to take on the role of Catwoman in a sequel to the Batman movie The Dark Knight. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

No Canadian Idol next year

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

AARON LYNETT/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Jully Black performed at Canadian Idol in September.

I'M JUST SAYIN': Yesterday began with an anonymous reader sending me an e-mail asking how I felt, now that my recent prediction — that one major Canadian network would probably always have an edge over its competition as long as it has two big reality franchises in its schedule — was obviously stale-dated, now that said major network was cancelling one of the shows.

After a quick Google and a check through the rest of my inbox, I wrote back and asked just what the hell they were talking about — this would be big news, and there wasn't a sign of it anywhere.

It was true, they replied — cast and crew of the show had been pink-slipped just before the holidays. A further Google revealed the likely source — an item on the Voteforthe worst.com web site, claiming that Canadian Idol was "cancelled, over, kaput, done."

I put a call in to a CTV publicist, who claimed that this was the first he'd heard of it. I asked him to "either confirm or deny" the story, rather relishing using those words as they were meant to be used for the first time in my whole career as a journalist. Wisely, he declined to do either, and said that he'd try to get someone from programming for me to talk to, though he wasn't making any promises.

Another trawl through the web came up empty — no press release from CTV, no brief from the Canadian Press, but just before noon, a new thread had opened up on CTV's own website forum titled "no more Canadian Idol," and in just over two hours, the sadly inevitable post blaming Stephen Harper was up, followed by a quote vaguely attributed to Idol judge Zack Werner lamenting that: "After six years the economy has come crashing down on idol. strange that ctv has sponsers for a show on which we watch american kids seek fame and fortune by singing but not enuff sponsers for our own (sic)."

Reactions on CTV's forum ranged from skeptical to hysterical, but by 2 p.m. there was a Facebook group devoted to saving the show, and further rumours were circulating between the Facebook site, CTV's forum and VFTW that another network had come to a deal with FremantleMedia and Insight Productions, the show's international and local producers, to take it over. With only two private major networks in the whole country, that would mean Global was being as conspicuously silent as CTV.

As I write this, the "Save Idol" Facebook site has 80 members, and my e-mail source has gone silent, and CTV has finally come back with a terse message that, "As a result of the current economic climate, production of Canadian Idol will rest for the 2009 broadcast year," though they retain the rights to the show. And that was the day that was.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

New TV spin with 'Househusbands'

REALITY SERIES Fox Reality Channel is developing a series that puts an attention-getting gender twist on the trophy-spouse reality genre.

The network has ordered nine hours of Househusbands of Hollywood, which follows a collection of stay-at-home spouses of successful L.A. women. Fox Reality hopes to find a new audience with the series and, if successful, expand the Househusbands brand beyond a single series (not unlike a certain group of Real Housewives on Bravo).

REUTERS

See complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and purchase tickets at metronews.ca/movies

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt
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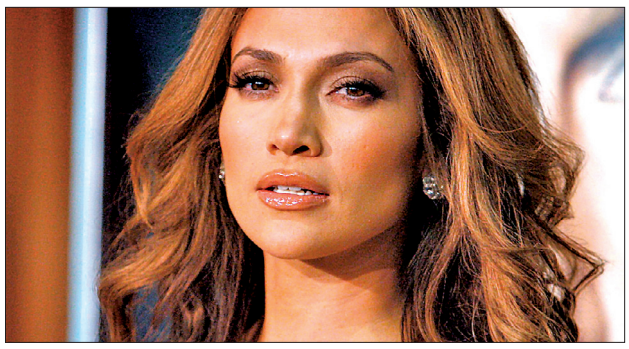


MARIO ANZUONI/REUTERS

Jennifer Lopez has signed up for a new romantic comedy Plan B.

New rom-com role for Lopez

Jennifer Lopez has come on board to star in the romantic comedy Plan B for CBS' nascent movie division.

The project involves a single woman who attempts to conceive via artificial insemination and winds up in a quandary after she finds romance. Production is scheduled to start in the spring, making it one of the first projects to get a green light at CBS Films.

Lopez has starred in a number of comedy hits such as Maid in Manhattan and Monster In-Law, and is set to star in the heist picture The Governess for Columbia.

REUTERS

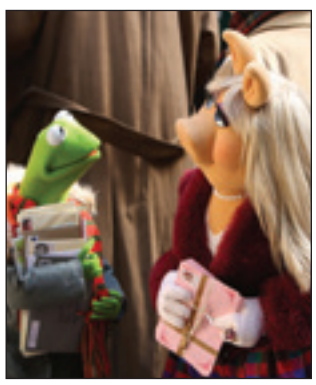
Entertainment in brief

SEQUEL House co-star Olivia Wilde and Beau Garrett are the first to sign on for Tron 2.0, a sequel to the 1982 Disney cult classic. The original, about a programmer thrust into a computer and forced to fight in games he helped create, is remembered for its sci-fi gladiator-style battles. REUTERS

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/17/08	251	308	3 CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Mr. Bean	Frosty	Holiday Festival on Ice (N)		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6 JOY	E! News	The Insider	Secret Millionaire (N) (CC)		Holidays	Nastiest Jobs	True Hollywood Story (CC)		News (N)
	254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
	250	321	9 CTV	etalk (CC)	Hollywood	A Muppets Christmas		Criminal Minds "Normal" (N)		CSI: NY "Forbidden Fruit" (N)		News (N)
	-	-	10 OMNI	The Daily	Frasier (CC)	Stargate SG-1 "Enigma"		Third Watch "Ohio" (CC)		Scrubs (CC)	Diya (CC)	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Bones (CC)		Bones (PA) (CC)		Ancestors in the Attic (CC)		News (N)
	256	389	12 VI	Instant Star	TMZ (N) (CC)	Pushing Daisies (N) (CC)		Private Practice (N) (CC)		(:01) Dirty Sexy Money (N)		News (CC)
	253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Stylista "The Right Fit" (CC)		I Love Money (CC)		EP Daily
	-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	Victoria's Secret Fashion		Stylista "The Right Fit" (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	Criminal Minds "Normal"		CSI: NY "Forbidden Fruit" (N)		News (N)
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	A Muppets Christmas		Life "Trapdoor" (N) (CC)		Law & Order "Zero" (CC)		News (N)
	602	568	19 W	Friends (CC)	Will & Grace	Shopping	Shopping	The Man Who Saved Christmas (2002) Jason Alexander.				Maxed Out
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Pushing Daisies (N) (CC)		Private Practice (N) (CC)		(:01) Dirty Sexy Money (N)		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	Real Men ★ (1987, Comedy) James Belushi, John Ritter.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Back Care Basics: Yoga		The Priests in Concert at Armagh Cathedral			Victor Borge: 100 Years of Music & Laughter!			Roy Orbison
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Secret Millionaire (N) (CC)		Bones (PA) (CC)		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	43 PBS	Frontline	Frontline "From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians" (Part 2 of 2) (CC)					My Music: Country Pop Legends (CC)		
	296	654	34 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Paid Program
	298	653	35 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Victoria's Secret Fashion		Stylista "The Right Fit" (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	36 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Sex and-City	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	37 WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Save-$1000	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	76 STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		(:37) Kitchen Nightmares		Late Late Show	
news	502	390	26 NW	Disney (N) (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Disney (CC)		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	Canucks	NHL Hockey Edmonton Oilers at Vancouver Canucks. (Subject to Blackout)					Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	NHL Hockey	SportsCentre (Live) (CC)			Boxing Wladimir Klitschko vs. Hasim Rahman. (CC)				SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Word Travels	Pilot Guides	Pilot Guides (CC)		Don't Forget Your Passport		Adventures	Ed's Up (CC)	Word Travels
	410	403	54 SCR	NBA Basketball San Antonio Spurs at New Orleans Hornets.				Score Tonight		Final Score	Final Score	Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pinks	Pass Time	Am. Thunder	Am. Thunder	Pinks	Pinks Out	Wrecked
	416	409	144 GLF	Footballers	Legends	Gol TV News		Footballers	Legends	Paid Program	Kings Club	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	Charlie Brown	Sabrina-Witch	Mon. Warriors	Fresh Prince	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline	Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50 TEL	Santa Claus	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	The Critic	Chicken	Lucy Devil
	557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	56 TRE	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie	Beren. Bears	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Into the Wild	Meerkat	Indian School	Indian School	Child's Christmas in Wales		An Indigo Christmas		Montreal Jazz
	575	583	20 CMT	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Donner Down	The Gift	Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Reba (CC)	Reba (CC)	Hope & Faith
	570	580	24 MM	50 Sexiest Videos		50 Sexiest Videos		Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	MuchOnDemand (CC)		MuchMeg
	600	564	29 H&G	Million Dollar Listing (CC)		Holmes on Homes (CC)		Mansions	The Stagers	Property	Unsellable	$1M Listing
	615	520	31 A&E	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Parking Wars
	628	584	32 SPKE	(6:00) The Ultimate Fighter				CSI: NY "Heroes" (CC)		Star Trek: Voyager (CC)		Deep Space 9
	521	560	34 TLC	Wallendas: Life on the Wire		Jon & Kate Plus 8 (CC)		Jon & Kate	Jon & Kate	Wallendas: Life on the Wire		Jon & Kate
	616	522	39 SHO	Kink in Hair	Kink in Hair	Durham County (CC)		Billable Hours	G-Spot (CC)	The Starter Wife (N) (CC)		House (CC)
	620	523	40 BVO	Arts & Minds	The Achievers	Law & Order "Vaya Con Dios"		Without a Trace "The Line"		Heavy Metal ★★ (2005, Documentary) (CC)		
	601	562	41 SLC	Filthy Rich: Cattle Drive		ET Canada	Matchmaker	Real Housewives of OC		Trading Spouses		Biggest Loser
	520	505	42 DIS	Mayday "Lockerbie Disaster"		Daily Planet (CC)		MythBusters Ninjas. (CC)		Cash Cab	Destroyed	Mayday (CC)
	522	506	44 HIS	NCIS "Probie" (CC)		Cities of the Underworld		Captain Cook: Obsession		NCIS "Probie" (CC)		Crime Stories
	627	528	45 SPC	Fields of Fear		Stargate SG-1 (CC)		Lost "Tricia Tanaka Is Dead"		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine		Star Trek
	294	650	47 TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Sex and-City	Sex and-City	The Legend of Zorro ★★ (2005) (PA) (CC)		
	619	525	48 TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210 (CC)		Reality	What	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	'70s Show	Family Guy
	603	561	52 FN	Top Chef (CC)		Dinner: Impossible (CC)		Challenge Knife skills. (CC)		Iron Chef America (CC)		Top Chef
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Comedy Now	RENO 911!	Daily Show
	320	621	60 CEN	(6:30) Phil the Alien ★★ (CC)		Botched (2007, Suspense) Stephen Dorff, Jaime Murray. (CC)				Dexter (CC)		Next ★★
	581	566	101 MTV	Dance Life	Dance Life	MTV Live	After	A Double Shot of Love (CC)		Dance Life	Dance Life	MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	Christmas in Connecticut		Christmas Together		Christmas in Connecticut ★★ (1945) Barbara Stanwyck.				Paid Program
	-	-	109 MUL	Matchmaker	Mom's-Upset	Van. Nights	Iranian Pop	Sabor Latino		Hola Que Tal		Patrol World

critics'corner

A Muppets Christmas: Letters to Santa
If it's half as much fun as "The Muppet Christmas Carol" or the specials they did with John Denver, this new holiday special is going to be a treat. When Kermit and company accidentally intercept three children's letters to St. Nick, they vow to hand-deliver them to the North Pole themselves with a little help from their friends. Whoopi Goldberg, Tony Sirico and Madison Pettis ("Cory in the House") are among their human co-stars. 8 PM on CTV



Life
When three Russians, including an engineer, are found dead, Crews and Reese (Damian Lewis, Sarah Shahi) are led to Russian mobster Roman Nevikov (Garret Dillahunt), who Crews believes is somehow connected to his own case. Meanwhile, Crews shoots an intruder who turns out to be someone he knows very well, and Reese falls back into old habits in "Trapdoor." 9 PM on NBC

Watts and Schreiber name son
Actors Naomi Watts and Liev Schreiber have named their new son, born Saturday, Samuel Kai Schreiber. **PEOPLE.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

50 Cent talks of fire

PEOPLE 50 Cent has opened up about the fire that destroyed his home earlier this year, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The rapper, whose real name is Curtis Jackson, refused to openly blame Shaniqua Tompkins for the blaze in May, but did confirm she was ordered to leave his home in Dix Hills, N.Y., just days before it was torched.

"The courts told her she had to leave. It's kind of more like, 'If I can't have you, you can't have it,'" he told Quddus Philippe, a correspondent for U.S. TV show TV One Access.

When Quddus asked the rapper if he believed Tompkins lit the fire, he replied: "Well, I don't want to say that — don't try to make me say something I don't want to say. But, the circumstances to it might seem that way."

Six people, including 50 Cent and Tompkins' 10-year-old son Marquis, were rushed to hospital after the blaze.

Earlier in the year, Tompkins had filed a lawsuit against 50 Cent, claiming he had promised her a house 10 years ago.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Williams denies plans to accept Ledger prize

PEOPLE Heath Ledger's ex-fiancee Michelle Williams has denied she was set to accept any awards the late star wins for his role in The Dark Knight, imdb.com reports.

Ledger's performance as The Joker in the last movie he completed before his drug overdose death in January is expected to earn him a clutch of posthumous prizes during the forthcoming awards season. He is already nominated for the Best Supporting Actor Golden Globe, and is hotly tipped to become the first posthumous acting Oscar winner since Peter Finch in 1977.

Williams, the mother of Ledger's daughter Matilida, was thought to be among those contending to accept awards on her ex's behalf, along with his father Kim.

But the actress won't be involved.

"No discussions have been made for Michelle to accept nor are there any plans to take part," her representative says.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Panettiere treats young patients

SHOPPING Hayden Panettiere took patients from Los Angeles' Children's Hospital on a shopping spree over the weekend, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress accompanied five girls on a shopping trip on Saturday. Although Panettiere tried to give the group fashion advice, the kids had their own opinions on which outfits they wanted to choose.

"Not many of them listened to me!" Panettiere said, and laughed.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Washington gets dual citizenship

PEOPLE Former Grey's Anatomy star Isaiah Washington has become an official citizen of Sierra Leone, imdb.com reports.

The actor was born in Houston, Tex., but has spent several months working with Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma in a bid to secure dual-nationality and celebrate his family's links to the African country.

President Koroma agreed to grant Washington full citizenship and hand him an official Sierra Leone passport in September.

The process has now been finalized and Washington is reportedly delighted to have achieved his goal.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Spears tops ET's hot list

PEOPLE Pop star Britney Spears has topped ET's annual Hot List, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Spears took the No. 1 spot in the list, made up of stars who have received the most coverage and mentions on the TV program Entertainment Tonight in the past year.

"From a historical election to surprising splits, sizzling romances and major comebacks, 2008 was a remarkable year for celebrity news," an ET writer said.

TV talk-show host Oprah Winfrey followed Spears on the list.

Rounding off the Top 5 were actor Brad Pitt, U.S. president-Elect Barack Obama and actress Angelina Jolie.

Other celebrities included in the Top 20 were actors George Clooney, Tom Cruise, Jennifer Aniston, Will Smith and Miley Cyrus.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Phillippe to spend holiday in Australia with girlfriend

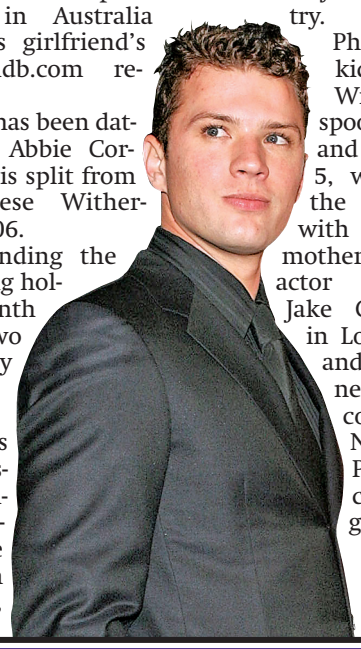
RELATIONSHIPS Actor Ryan Phillippe is set to spend Christmas in Australia meeting his girlfriend's family, imdb.com reports.

Phillippe has been dating actress Abbie Cornish since his split from ex-wife Reese Witherspoon in 2006.

After spending the Thanksgiving holiday last month with his two children by Witherspoon, Phillippe has flown to Australia to enjoy a romantic festive break with his partner, meeting her extended family in the country.

Phillippe's kids with Witherspoon, Ava, 9, and Deacon, 5, will spend the holidays with their mother and her actor boyfriend Jake Gyllenhaal in Los Angeles and Tennessee, according to New York Post gossip column PageSix.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Jennifer is a good singer: Mayer

RELATIONSHIPS Jennifer Aniston loves singing and could have a successful music career, according to boyfriend John Mayer, imdb.com reports.

The actress is shy when it comes to showing off her voice, and only does it when she thinks no one else is listening. But Mayer is so impressed by her vocal talents, he's convinced she could become a recording artist.

"Do you know that girl can sing ...? She does it when she doesn't think anybody's paying attention," he tells America's Ok! magazine.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

The Weather Network
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Today Flurries 40% -1° / -8°

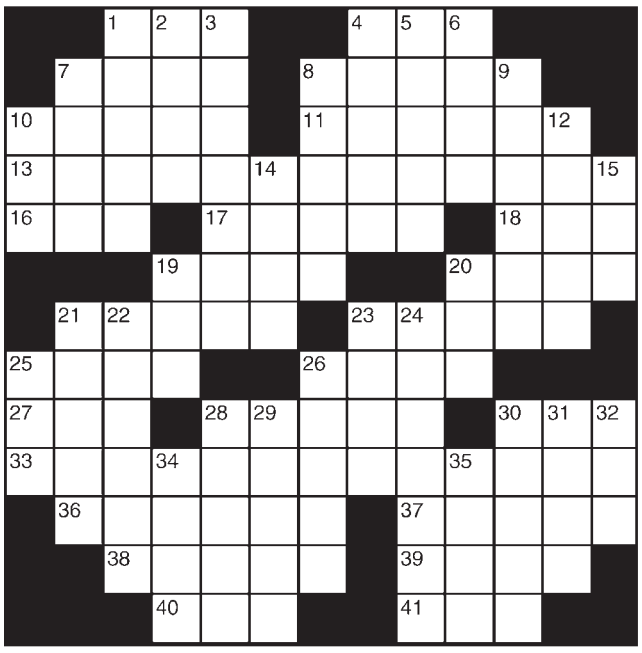
Thursday Mainly sunny -4° / -7°

Friday Sunny -6° / -8°

WeatherEye... Free App Available on iPhone.

For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**

Take Five



Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	7	9				3	5	
			9		7			
6	4			3			1	9
		8	4		3	9		
2								7
		4	2		8	5		
1	6			5			9	2
			1		9			
	2	5				1	4	

Crossword across

1 Sloppy home
4 Fed. watchdog org.
7 Gambling game
8 Vise
10 Had a bug
11 Esteems
13 What Jack did
16 Still, in verse
17 Senior moment
18 Cattle call?
19 Yon maiden's
20 Succotash ingredient
21 Steeple
23 Click-and-drag device
25 Reynolds or Lancaster
26 "Monopoly" pair
27 Blackbird
28 Construction-site machine
30 Bashful
33 Jill's fate
36 Read
37 Standards
38 Looks for
39 Rainbow
40 Dentist's degree (Abbr.)
41 Baseballer's hat

Crossword down

1 Beauty parlor
2 "Star —"
3 Alpine singer
4 Soft silk thread
5 Terpsichore's domain
6 Cupid's specialty
7 Conflagration
8 Fish side dish
9 Ads for upcoming TV shows
10 Honest politician
12 Cussed
14 Tortoise's opponent
15 Negative prefix
19 Smack
20 Prompt
21 Dawn
22 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, etc.
23 Chinese dynasty
24 Vast
25 Cudgel
26 Copenhagen populace
28 Gave hints
29 Puts on the line
30 Denude
31 Fashion lines?
32 Century fractions (Abbr.)
34 Raised
35 "In — penny, in ..."

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

U	T	A	H	■	A	D	O	■	T	R	A	P		
S	A	L	E	■	S	E	A	■	H	O	P	E		
S	C	A	R	■	P	E	T	E	R	O	S	E		
R	O	S	E	H	I	P	■	M	O	T	E	L		
■	■	■	S	I	C	■	R	U	M	■	■	■		
O	B	E	Y	S	■	H	I	P	B	O	N	E		
R	O	O	■	■	B	A	G	■	■	N	O	N		
B	O	N	E	D	R	Y	■	S	H	A	R	D		
■	■	■	T	E	A	■	A	P	E	■	■	■		
G	H	O	U	L	■	D	R	Y	L	A	N	D		
L	A	N	D	L	O	R	D	■	P	L	E	A		
A	L	E	E	■	F	O	O	■	E	T	A	L		
M	O	S	S	■	A	P	R	■	R	O	P	E		

2	7	6	9	3	5	1	4	8
4	9	3	2	1	8	7	5	6
5	1	8	6	4	7	2	3	9
3	6	1	5	8	2	9	7	4
8	5	2	7	9	4	3	6	1
9	4	7	1	6	3	5	8	2
7	3	4	8	2	9	6	1	5
1	8	9	3	5	6	4	2	7
6	2	5	4	7	1	8	9	3

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Pesto-Coated Pork Chops

INGREDIENTS:

6 oz (175 g) eggless noodles
2 cups (500 mL) fresh basil leaves
3 garlic cloves, peeled
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
1/2 tsp (2 mL) freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp (25 mL) plain dry bread crumbs
2 tbsp (25 mL) extra-virgin olive oil
4 centre-cut pork loin chops (1/2 inch/1 cm thick, about 4 oz/125 g each)

METHOD:

1. Prepare noodles according to package directions. Drain and keep hot. Meanwhile, preheat broiler.
2. Put basil, garlic and a pinch each of salt and black pepper in food processor. Pulse until roughly chopped. Add bread crumbs and process 30 seconds until well blended.
3. With motor running, slowly add oil through feed tube until puréed. Set aside.
4. Coat large heavy ovenproof skillet and broiler rack with nonstick cooking spray. Set skillet over high heat until very hot but not smoking. Sprinkle both sides of chops with remaining salt and black pepper. Sauté chops until browned, about 1 minute on each side. Remove from heat. Spread chops on both sides with pesto and transfer to broiler pan.
5. Broil chops until pesto is slightly darker and juices run clear, about 2 minutes on each side. Divide noodles evenly among 4 plates and top with a pork chop.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You won't become a casualty of love. Phone a funny friend for a surprise. A flaw is found by a friendly person.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Take care on slippery surfaces. Someone's gullibility will scare you. Get a strong grip on your sense of responsibility.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Accept loving attention from your admirers. Someone's intuition gets the better of you. Good fortune comes through being diplomatic.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Somebody's hypochondria will require your patience. An odd stranger intrudes on an important meeting. A mistake leads to mistreatment.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A researcher uncovers a financial embarrassment. An elder gives evidence of cruelty. You'll need to get out more often..

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
A bureaucrat wins a stupid argument. A professional call causes a delay in plans. You're optimistic in the face of harsh reality.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A fearless person accepts adjustments gracefully. An egotistical friend will back you up. Too much devotion can be frustrating.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Try to get through to a coward. A bitter person speaks the truth. A chubby pal's attempts to fix things will resolve nothing.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Everything's okay with a trustworthy person. A dreadful event leads to a disgrace. Someone is waiting for you to make a tough decision.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
A good friend needs more financial support. A beloved person shows where you went wrong. A flirt breaks up a party.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
A blundering prankster is more fun than usual. Necessary money is made available to those in need. Avoid nasty spats that are counter-productive.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Resistance to an opponent undermines understanding. An innocent is mired in a strange arrangement.

WIN $50 to Medley's Restaurant
Check out Urban Eats in tomorrow's Metro for details on how you can win.
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BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

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1. How-old-you-are measuring standard (1)
2. Daily Planet reporter Lois's jets (1)
3. The B in a BLT seized and carried off (2)
4. Polite bloke's perfumes or aromas (1)
5. Insincerely compliment a baseball hitte
6. Merely one excited sensation (2)
7. Mafioso's surf in "surf and turf" meals (2)

ANSWERS
1. AGE GAUGE 2. LANES PLANES 3. BACON TAKEN 4. CENTS SCENTS
5. FLATTER BATTER 6. SINGLE TINGLE 7. MOBSTERS LOBSTERS

12-17-08

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